NATION

**Drunk bikers caused tragic Andhra bus fire: Police**

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

**Biggest Adani investors are US insurers, not LIC: Data**

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

**Gukesh & Divya clinch double gold at ECC Cup**

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

# SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 27 OCTOBER 2025 | MONDAY | BENGALURU | 4 JUMADA I, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 292 | Pages: 8

## EC to hold presser on pan-India SIR today

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

The Election Commission (EC) is set to hold a press conference on Monday at 4.15pm to announce a pan-India Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters' list. While the invitation specifies the time of the press briefing, officials confirm that it pertains to the intensive revision of electoral rolls. In the first phase of the SIR, 10 to 15 states will be covered, particularly those slated for Assembly elections in 2026. Among these states are Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Assam, and Puducherry, all of which are due to hold elections next year. *—PTI*

## Rape accused paraded, beaten to death in J'khand

**CHAIBASA, 26 OCT**

A 56-year-old man accused of raping a mentally challenged woman was allegedly garlanded with slippers, paraded, and beaten to death by villagers in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district, police said on Sunday. The incident took place on Friday night in Devambir village under the Sonua police limits. The victim, identified as Simon Tirkey of Tepasai Tola, was reportedly dragged out of his house, paraded through the village, and locked inside a room, where he was beaten with sticks until he died. According to police, Tirkey was accused of sexually assaulting a mentally challenged woman, which allegedly enraged her family members and led to the mob attack. *—PTI*

## Celebrate 150yrs of Vande Mataram: Modi

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his latest 'Mann Ki Baat' radio address, urged citizens to honour the 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram', describing it as a vibrant representation of India. "Let us make this year memorable by carrying forward its values for future generations," he remarked. Modi announced a series of programmes nationwide to celebrate the milestone. He praised various initiatives, including the revival of mangroves in Gujarat and Garbage Cafes in Chhattisgarh. Highlighting the paramilitary forces' efforts in utilising Indian dog breeds, he noted Mudhol Hound's recent success. Modi also celebrated local coffee cultivation in Odisha's

## Cyclone Montha threatens WB, Andhra, Odisha

**KOLKATA, 26 OCT**

A deep depression over the Bay of Bengal, which is in the process of intensifying into a cyclonic storm, will bring heavy rain in some districts of West Bengal from 28-31 October, the IMD said on Sunday. Cyclone Montha is likely to cross Andhra Pradesh coast as a 'severe cyclone' on 28 October night, will start bringing light to moderate rain in some south Bengal districts. The Odisha government on Sunday put all 30 districts on alert the storm was moving towards the east coast. *—PTI*

***>>>More on Page 4***

# US ties with Pak not at India's expense: Rubio

## Says US wants to expand relations with Pak

**WASHINGTON, 26 OCT**

The US sees an opportunity to expand its strategic relationship with Pakistan but it will not be at the expense of its historic and important ties with India, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said.

Ahead of his meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in Kuala Lumpur on Monday, Rubio, referring to India's energy ties with Russia, said New Delhi has already expressed a desire to diversify its procurement of crude oil.

The US secretary of state was interacting with journalists ahead of his trip to Malaysia for the ASEAN summit.

Rubio, to a question on the US' ties with Pakistan, said New Delhi is "concerned for obvious reasons" and that Washington's relationship with Islamabad will not be at the expense of the ties with New Delhi.

"But, I think they (India) have to understand we have to have relations with a lot of different countries. We see an opportunity to expand our strategic relationship with Pakistan," he said.

Marco Rubio ***PHOTO: X***

"I think the Indians are very mature when it comes to diplomacy and things of that nature. Look, they have some relationships with countries that we don't have relationships with. So, it's part of a mature, pragmatic foreign policy," he said.

"I don't think anything we're doing with Pakistan comes at the expense of our relationship or friendship with India, which is deep, historic, and important," Rubio added.

The US-Pakistan ties have witnessed an upswing in the last six months, especially after US President Donald Trump's meeting with Pakistan Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir following the military conflict between India and Pakistan in May.

To another question on if India will be willing to really shove off its purchases of Russian oil for a trade deal with the US, Rubio said New Delhi has already expressed an interest in diversifying its oil portfolio. *—PTI*

> **India will completely stop (buying Russian oil). China's cutting back very substantially on the purchase of Russian oil**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

**NEVER ENDING CONSTRUCTION**

For more than 6 months, construction work at Bengaluru's Chamrajpet 5th Main Road has not been completed, bothering residents and motorists alike. A scene on Sunday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD***

# High Court may be shifted out of Cubbon Park: DKS

DyCM DK Shivakumar ***PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD***

**BENGLAURU, 26 OCT**

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said that the Karnataka government is considering shifting the Karnataka High Court out of the Attara Kacheri in Cubbon Park. The government is in the process of identifying a suitable land for the new building within the Central Business District (CBD) area, he said.

Speaking to press after his 'Walk with Bengaluru' programme in Cubbon Park on Sunday, he said, "The Chief Justice and several lawyers had requested that 15-20 acres of land be given for the relocation of the High Court. This will be discussed with the government as well. We will take the court staff into confidence and examine where space can be found nearby."

The Bengaluru Advocates' Association (AAB) has already made a request to shift the HC to another location within the CBD, he noted.

"A few lawyers met and suggested using the Race Course space. I have told them to think about it later because there are some legal complications," he added. He said the government wanted to ensure the court was moved to a place with Metro connectivity. Shivakumar also announced a Rs 5-crore grant for upgrading Cubbon Park. *—Salar News*

## Housing Minister Zameeer allegedly asks cop to 'help relative'

**BENGALURU, 26 OCT**

State Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan was heard requesting a police offer to "help" a relative involved in a cheating case in Chikkaballapura district in a leaked audio clip which has gone viral.

The case involves a complaint filed by a businessman from Chikkaballapur, Ramakrishna alias Jolada Kitti, who had sold popcorn worth Rs 1.89 crore to three businessmen from Hyderabad. Despite repeated requests, the accused failed to pay the amount, leading to a complaint being lodged at the Peresandra police station. Police apprehended Syed Akbar Pasha, but Khan appeared to appeal on behalf of his relative.

In the audio, Khan is heard telling Peresandra PSI Jagadish Reddy, "Please help him out"

The PSI responds, "If both parties agree and clear the dues, we can close the case. It's an ego issue. But neither side is." *—Salar News*

## Waqf Act will be thrown into dustbin if INDIA wins: Tejashwi

**KATIHAR, 26 OCT**

If the INDIA bloc is voted to power in Bihar, the Waqf (Amendment) Act would be "thrown into the dustbin", the opposition coalition's CM candidate Tejashwi Yadav said on Sunday.

Addressing public rallies in the Muslim-dominated Katihar, Kishanganj and Araria districts, Yadav said his father and RJD Chief, Lalu Prasad never compromised with communal forces in the country.

"But Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has always supported such forces, and it is because of him that the RSS and its affiliates are spreading communal hatred in the state as well as in the country," he said.

The Waqf (Amendment) Act was passed by Parliament in April.

RJD MLC Mohammad Qari Sohaib stirred a controversy by stating that if Yadav becomes the CM of Bihar, "all bills will be torn apart, including the Waqf bill", inviting a barrage of attacks from their opposition.

He claimed that this election is a fight to protect the Constitution, democracy and brotherhood. Yadav claimed that the NDA government has done nothing for the development of the Seemanchal region, comprising Purnia, Araria, Kishnaganj and Katihar. *—PTI*

***>>>More on Page 3***

## Madras HC says cryptocurrency is property

**CHENNAI, 26 OCT**

The Madras High Court has ruled that cryptocurrency qualifies as property under Indian law, capable of ownership and being held in trust. Justice Anand Venkatesh stated, "There can be no doubt that 'crypto currency' is a property... it is capable of being enjoyed and possessed."

The ruling arises from a petition filed by an investor whose XRP holdings on the WazirX platform were frozen following a cyberattack in July 2024.

The applicant claimed her assets were distinct from the stolen Ethereum tokens, and sought an injunction under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.

Justice Venkatesh remarked on cryptocurrency's defining qualities, highlighting its identification and transferability. He added, "In Indian law regime, the crypto currency is treated as a virtual digital asset... which is capable of being stored, traded and sold." *—Agencies*

## CBI takes over Karur stampede case investigation

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

The CBI has taken over the probe of the Karur stampede, in which 41 people were killed and 60 others were injured during a political rally of actor-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK).

A special team of the CBI visited the site at Velusamypuram in Karur in Tamil Nadu.

The CBI has re-registered the FIR of the state police and also informed the local court about the development.

The case was handed over to the CBI by the Supreme Court on a plea filed by TVK.

The apex court directed the CBI director to appoint a senior officer to take over the investigation. The court also set up a three-member supervisory committee headed by former apex court judge Ajay Rastogi to monitor the probe.

The court also flayed top police officers who commented on the matter. *—PTI*

**RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

# *Govt: 8,000 schools with zero students hire 20,000 teachers*

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Nearly 8,000 schools across India reported zero enrolments during the 2024–25 academic session, with West Bengal topping the list, followed by Telangana, according to data from the Ministry of Education.

The country recorded 7,993 schools with no students, a decline of over 5,000 from the 12,954 such schools the previous year. Despite the absence of students, 20,817 teachers were employed in these institutions, of which 17,965 were in West Bengal, which also accounted for 3,812 schools with zero enrolments, the highest among all states.

Telangana reported 2,245 schools without students and 1,016 teachers, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 463 such schools and 223 teachers.

Telangana reported 2,245 schools without students ***PHOTO: PTI***

Uttar Pradesh had 81, while Haryana, Maharashtra, Goa, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura reported none.

An Education Ministry official said, "School education is a state subject. States have been advised to address zero-enrolment issues and merge schools for better resource utilisation."

All Union Territories, including Delhi, Puducherry, and Lakshadweep, reported no schools with zero enrolments.

Meanwhile, over 33 lakh students study in more than 1.1 lakh single-teacher schools, with Andhra Pradesh having the highest number, followed by Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Lakshadweep.

However, in terms of enrolment, Uttar Pradesh leads, followed by Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh. The total count of single-teacher schools dropped from 1,18,190 in 2022–23 to 1,10,971 in 2023–24, marking a 6 per cent decline. *—PTI*

## 200 Belagavi medicos ill after food poisoning

**BELAGAVI, 26 OCT**

More than 200 students from KLE Society's Institutions of Medical Sciences in Belagavi were hospitalised on Saturday night following a suspected case of food poisoning. The affected students, mostly pursuing MBBS and residing in the girls' hostel, complained of vomiting, diarrhoea, and dehydration soon after dinner.

Hospital sources said several students were in a serious condition when admitted. "All are adults, and over half of them required immediate medical attention. They were treated with intravenous fluids and are now recovering," a hospital staff member said.

Preliminary reports indicate that egg curry served during dinner may have caused the contamination. Students reportedly began vomiting shortly after eating and were rushed to the hospital run by the same institution. *—Salar News*

***PHOTO: SALAR***

## Mob beats youth to death over 'affair' in Bidar

**BIDAR, 26 OCT:**

A shocking incident in Bidar district has stirred outrage after a viral video showed a man being brutally beaten with sticks, allegedly over an illicit affair. The Chintaki police have arrested two men — the woman's father and brother — in connection with the murder.

The incident occurred in Naganpalli, a border village in Aurad taluk. The deceased, Vishnu Jaising, 27, a native of Gaunagaon village in Nanded district, Maharashtra, was reportedly in a relationship with a married woman from the same area. After living together for about a year, the woman returned to her village three months ago.

On 21 October, Vishnu visited Naganpalli for Diwali, where an argument broke out. The woman's father Ashok and brother Gajanan allegedly tied his hands and legs and beat him with sticks, tying him to a pole.

The video of the assault soon went viral, prompting police action. Vishnu was moved from Aurad Hospital to BRIMS Bidar and later to Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad, where he succumbed to his injuries on 22 October. *—Salar News*

## Rowdy-sheeter held as bar brawl hurts 2 in M'luru

**MANGALURU, 26 OCT**

Police have arrested a rowdy-sheeter accused of leading a violent assault following a drunken brawl at a Surathkal bar that left two youths injured. The main accused, Gururaj, was apprehended on Saturday, a day after authorities arrested three alleged accomplices, Sushanth alias Kadavi, 29; KV Alex Santosh, 27; and Nithin, 26; all from the Surathkal area. Arun Shetty, 56; was also detained for allegedly harbouring the accused. The incident occurred around 10.30pm on Thursday at a bar in Kana, where Gururaj and his associates, reportedly intoxicated, quarrelled with victim Nizam and his friends, including Hassan Mukshid. The altercation escalated when the accused allegedly stabbed Nizam and attacked Mukshid with sharp weapons. Police are looking for another suspect—*PTI*

## Mild earthquake shakes Bidar; none hurt

**BIDAR, 26 OCT**

A mild earthquake with a magnitude of 2.9 on the Richter scale shook Bidar district of the State early on Sunday morning, as reported by the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC). The tremor struck at 3.42am, with its epicentre located 2.4km northwest of Bhaskarnagar village in Chittaguppa taluk, at a depth of 5km. KSNDMC noted that the seismic intensity was low, with tremors potentially felt within a 30 to 40km radius. "No harm has been reported, and residents need not panic as the tremor was of low intensity and non-destructive," stated KSNDMC. Villagers in Bhaskarnagar and surrounding areas experienced mild shaking, but there were no reports of damage.—*PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

## Mysuru marathon: 4,000 runners mark Postal Week

**MYSURU, 26 OCT**

Over 4,000 fitness enthusiasts participated in Mysuru's inaugural marathon, organised by the Karnataka Postal Circle, to celebrate National Postal Week on Sunday. MP Yaduveer Krishnadutta Chamaraja Wadiyar flagged off the event, which featured categories including a full marathon of 42.5 km, a half marathon of 21.5 km, and 10km and 5km categories. The route began at the Postal Training Centre in Nazarbad, covering Chamundi Hills and other prominent city locations. Chief Postmaster General K Prakash said the marathon aims to popularise running in Mysuru, similar to major marathons in Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai, while showcasing India Post's services to younger generations. —*Salar News*

# 31 fishermen saved after 11 days at sea

### Steering gear failure stranded them 100 miles off the coast of Mangaluru in the Arabian Sea

**MANGALURU, 26 OCT**

The Indian Coast Guard said it rescued 31 fishermen stranded aboard the fishing boat IFB Sant Anton-I, which had been adrift in the Arabian Sea for 11 days due to a steering gear failure. The fishing boat was last reported approximately 100 nautical miles off New Mangaluru.

According to an official release, on 24 October, the Indian Coast Guard Headquarters No. 3 (Karnataka) launched a Search and Rescue (SAR) operation after receiving information about the missing vessel, which was based in Goa.

- Leveraging the Integrated Operations Centre and real time weather data, the Coast Guard tracked the boat

ICGS Kasturba Gandhi, which was on routine patrol, was immediately diverted to the last known position of the distressed vessel. Simultaneously, a Coast Guard Dornier aircraft from Kochi was tasked for an aerial search to locate the missing boat, which had drifted significantly due to adverse weather conditions.

Leveraging the Integrated Operations Centre and real time weather data, the Coast Guard plotted the probable drift and directed the ship to the updated location. On 25 October, the Dornier aircraft successfully sighted the fishing boat, enabling ICGS Kasturba Gandhi to reach the spot and provide critical assistance, including logistics support, damage assessment, and on-site repair of the steering system and ensuring watertight integrity of the IFB.

After stabilising the vessel, the Coast Guard ship handed over the distress IFB to another IFB to tow the IFB Sant Anton-I safely to Honnavar fishing harbour, ensuring the wellbeing of all 31 crew members onboard. —*Agencies*

The 31 fishermen after being rescued by the Coast Guard on Sunday PHOTO: ANI

# Tejasvi, DKS to meet after clash

### The duo locked horns over Tunnel Road project, B'luru infra

**BENGALURU, 26 OCT**

BJP MP Tejasvi Surya is set to meet Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar over the Tunnel Road project on Tuesday. Surya hit back that Shivakumar's comments on Saturday where he termed the Bengaluru South MP an "empty vessel" by saying that the City's future cannot be shaped by political ego.

"Our opposition to the tunnel road is not just restricted to the damage it will cause to Lalbagh and Sankey Tank, but to the whole of the City. The project will worsen traffic in Bengaluru and not address the core issue, which is reducing private vehicles and increasing public transport," Surya told reporters.

Surya said he intends to present alternative solutions to Shivakumar.

Surya added that the City need "bipartisan leadership".

"Bengaluru will not benefit from an ego fight between DK Shivakumar and Tejasvi Surya. What Bengaluru needs today is a comprehensive urban mobility plan. We don't have objections to the completion of pending flyovers in the City. Our objection is only to the tunnel road because it won't solve the problem. It's going to be a waste of public money," he said.

Shivakumar, while confirming the meeting, said, "No one else but Tejasvi Surya is opposing tunnel road. He has sought a meeting with me. I have given him time for meeting. He is a public representative. Criticising is not important -- let him do that -- but at the same time he should come up with solutions as well."

"No one can stop me. Only God can stop me," he added.

Speaking about City's infrastructure projects, he said, "We have to expand the metro rail network. The Centre will give only 13 to 14 per cent of the total cost of the project. The rest everything will be borne by us. Yet we are doing it. We will do our job." —*Agencies*

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar interacts with citizens and plays with a Siberian Husky during his 'Walk with Bengaluru Citizens' initiate at Cubbon Park, in Bengaluru, on Sunday PHOTOS: MOHAMMAD ASAD

### HDK is uneducated: DKS on khata row

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar called JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswammy uneducated after the latter criticised the government's khata conversion as an "extorsion scheme". Shivakumar said that "Kumaraswamy is not educated. He does not have basic common sense". The Congress government recently launched a scheme to allow people with B-khata in the GBA area to convert them into A-khatas, a move the Union Minister came down heavily on. "Let him take away from my pocket if we are looting," DyCM added.

> **He (Tejasvi Surya) has asked for time, and I have told him that we will meet on Tuesday. Let him give suggestions; no one can stop me. Only God can stop me**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

**'CREATE A NEW MINISTRY'**

# Make Priyank head of RSS affairs: Tejasvi

**BENGALURU, 26 OCT**

BJP MP Tejasvi Surya asked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to create a separate ministry for IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge, saying that the latter is "least interested in the ministry" he was assigned, a jab at the Kalaburagi district-in-charge's recent comments on the RSS.

"In the last two-and-a-half years, I haven't seen the IT Minister make even a single statement on his ministry," Surya told press in City on Sunday. "The Chief Minister should make things easier for him. It not difficult for the Chief Minister to make a new ministry. Maybe the Chief Minister should consider creating a new ministry for RSS affairs or RSS investigatory affairs."

Priyank hit back, saying "Tejasvi Surya has contributed zero to the development of Bengaluru in the field of IT. Can he name one project that he or BJP MPs from Bengaluru have brought in? Why are semiconductor industries going to Assam and Gujarat when they want to come to Bengaluru? What is there in Gujarat and Assam? Is there talent there?"

- Priyank had earlier urged Siddaramaiah to prohibit RSS activities in government institutions, alleging that the organisation was "brainwashing young minds" and promoting a "philosophy against the Constitution."

Priyank had earlier urged Siddaramaiah to prohibit RSS activities in government institutions, alleging that the organisation was "brainwashing young minds" and promoting a "philosophy against the Constitution." —*Salar News*

**GURU NANAK DEV CELEBRATIONS**

Members of the Sikh community took out a procession for Nagar Kirtan - a major Sikh festival - marking the Prakash Purab (birthday celebration) of Guru Nanak Dev, in Bengaluru on Sunday PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

# DKS plays down Delhi trip amid Cabinet rejig talks

**BENGALURU, 26 OCT**

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Sunday said his visit to New Delhi was a routine engagement.

He said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would speak about the Cabinet reshuffle.

"I regularly go there (New Delhi). Whenever there is work, I go there. I will go to meet the high command, to take rest, for shopping, also for court cases," Shivakumar told reporters before leaving for the national capital.

Siddaramaiah on Saturday hinted that Cabinet reshuffle would happen after November when his government completes two-and-half years.

On his scheduled visit to New Delhi on 16 November, he said it is primarily for the launch of a book authored by former party leader and senior lawyer Kapil Sibal.

"I will meet the party High Command," he said.

Siddaramaiah further said the winter session of the Karnataka Assembly is likely to be held in December. —*PTI*

# Kiran, Mohandas meet DKS

**BENGALURU, 26 OCT**

Biocon Chief Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and former Infosys CFO Mohandas Pai met Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar amid a war of words over the condition of the City's infrastructure.

Mazumdar-Shaw said that they agreed on an action plan to fix bottle necks in the City.

"We had a very constructive meeting Shivakumar to agree to an action plan to fix key infra bottlenecks in roads, ORR, PRR drainage traffic n garbage (sic)," she wrote on X.

Shivakumar told press that "I took their opinion. We cannot leave them just because they criticise us. They are part of Bengaluru. They have given some good suggestions. We have to complete them within the democratic and bureaucratic setup. They are taxpayers. We have to listen to them."

Meanwhile, Pai, in a post on X, commended Shivakumar's Walk with Bengaluru initiative.

"You® interactions are bridging the gap between voters and their representatives. You have take many good decisions over last 3 months for our City. You has completed the LARGEST URBAN REFORM FOR ANY INDIAN CITY IN DECADES BY CREATING GBA!" he wrote.

Tensions recently flared between the State government and several industry leaders – most notably Mazumdar-Shar – over the City's infrastructure and roads. —*Salar News*

Biocon Chief Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, former Infosys CFO Mohandas Pai, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and others on Sunday PHOTO: X @KIRANSHAW

## State unveils GIS model for efficient governance

**BENGALURU, 26 OCT**

The State government has announced that it has significantly improved planning, monitoring, and transparency across various sectors through a technology-driven governance model. In a report titled "Success Stories in Governance through Geographical Information System (GIS) – Karnataka's Experience," the State government highlights the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre (KSRSAC). Established in 1986 under the Department of e-Governance, it has pioneered innovations in decision-making through GIS technology.

The Karnataka Geographic Information System (K-GIS) platform serves as a vital digital resource, offering spatial data and location-based information to government departments and citizens. Initiatives like the Dishank mobile application allow citizens to access land and survey details directly. —*PTI*

**2ND IN A MONTH**

# *Tiger kills Mysuru cattle herder*

**MYSURU, 26 OCT**

Panic has engulfed villagers in Mysuru district following a fatal tiger attack on 58-year-old Rajashekar Murthy, a cattle herder from Mullur. The incident occurred on Sunday while he was grazing his cattle in an open field.

This attack marks the second fatality linked to a man-eating tiger in Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's home district within a month; the first being in Badagalpura village. Forest officials reported that upon learning of the incident, personnel from the Hediyala forest range and Saraguru police quickly arrived on the scene.

Angered by the recurring attacks, villagers protested, accusing the Forest Department of negligence. Villagers noted the absence of forested areas near Mullur and expressed concerns over tigers frequently being sighted in the vicinity, even injuring locals and attacking livestock.

Forest Minister Eshwara B Khandre, voiced his sorrow over the tragedy and urged caution for those grazing cattle or working near forest edges. He assured immediate action to capture the tiger and pledged compensation for the victim's family. —*Salar News*

This attack marks the second fatality linked to a man-eating tiger in Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's home district within a month PHOTO: X

## RSS leader booked for hate speech during Deepavali

**MANGALURU, 26 OCT**

A police case has been lodged against RSS leader Kalladka Prabhakar Bhat and the organisers of a Deepotsava event held in Uppalige, after a complaint was filed by a resident of Puttur taluk. According to a statement from Puttur Rural Police on Sunday, the complaint claimed that Bhat's speech, broadcast on the 'Kahale News' YouTube channel, incited "religious hatred, insulted women's dignity, and threatened public peace."

The event took place on 20 October. It alleged that Bhat made derogatory remarks about both Hindu and Muslim communities and mentioned voter numbers, allegedly fostering religious discord.

The case was registered under relevant sections of the BNS. —*PTI*

## Monitor UP slaughterhouses with AI: BJP MLA

LUCKNOW, 26 OCT

BJP MLA Rajeshwar Singh has urged the Uttar Pradesh government to regulate slaughterhouses using AI and CCTV monitoring to curb animal cruelty and ensure hygienic non-vegetarian food. In a letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Singh, a former ED officer and Supreme Court lawyer, recommended a "humane governance model" and a UP Humane Slaughter Protocol 2025. He noted that only half of the state's 260 licensed slaughterhouses have active CCTV and many fail animal welfare norms despite FSSAI certification. Singh suggested AI tools for detecting juvenile or pregnant animal slaughter, a public portal for complaints and an inter-departmental task force to improve animal welfare, food safety and the state's economic brand. —*PTI*

## Union Minister lauds cop for firing at rowdy-sheeter

HYDERABAD, 26 OCT

Union Minister of State for Home Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Sunday praised DCP (South East Zone) Chaitanya Kumar and his gunman for their courage after opening fire on a rowdy-sheeter who attempted to attack them. The incident occurred on Saturday evening when the officers, en route to their office, tried to apprehend a suspect involved in a mobile phone snatching. The accused attacked the DCP and his gunman, prompting the officer to fire two rounds in self-defence. Both the accused and the police officers were taken to hospital. The Minister said their bravery was an inspiration to all policemen and stressed that law and order must be upheld without compromise. —*PTI*

## Pilots' body urges DGCA to cut flight duty time

NEW DELHI, 26 OCT

Pilots' body Airline Pilots' Association of India (ALPA India) on Sunday urged aviation watchdog Director General of Civil Aviation to withdraw the flight duty time extension for two-pilot Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft operations, saying the decision creates a "scenario ripe for fatigue induced errors". For the Boeing 787, two-man flight crew operations, the flight duty time limitation has been increased to 10.30 hours from 10 hours and the flight duty period (FDP) to 14.00 hours from 13 hours. Tata Group-owned Air India operates Dreamliners. ALPA India said the idea of formulating a Civil Aviation Requirement on FDTL was based on extensive research and scientific study on human fatigue and its operational consequences. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

## BJP MP Sanjay Jaiswal gets extortion call

BETTIAH, 26 OCT

Senior BJP MP from Bihar, Sanjay Jaiswal, allegedly received an extortion call threatening to kill his son unless he paid Rs 10 crore, police said on Sunday. Jaiswal, who serves as the BJP chief whip in the Lok Sabha, reported receiving two calls on Friday afternoon within minutes of each other, SDPO Vivek Deep said. An FIR has been lodged at the Town police station, and authorities are tracing the caller, believed to be linked to a criminal gang. There is no evidence suggesting political rivalry, the SDPO added. Jaiswal, a former Bihar BJP president, represents Pashchim Champaran. Police are pursuing the investigations and examining all investigative angles in the to ensure the safety of the MP"s family.—*PTI*

# Tejashwi promises insurance & pension

## It applies to only Panchayat workers in Bihar; he adds that they will get double the pay

PATNA, 26 OCT

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday said allowances of the representatives of Bihar's Panchayati Raj system will be doubled if the INDIA bloc comes to power in the state.

He also announced Rs 50 lakh insurance cover and pension for them.

The panchayati raj system consists of three levels of governance – zila parishad, panchayat samiti, and gram panchayat. The chairpersons are known as 'mukhiya' (gram panchayat), 'pramukh' (panchayat samiti), and 'adhyaksha' (zila parishad).

The Nitish Kumar government increased allowances and other benefits of Panchayati Raj institution functionaries and ward members across the state.

The monthly allowance of zila parishad presidents was increased to Rs 30,000 from Rs 20,000, vice presidents (Rs 20,000 from Rs 10,000) and 'mukhiyas' (Rs 7,500 per month from Rs 5,000). There are 8,053 gram panchayats, 533 panchayat samitis and 38 zila parishads.

A 'gram kachahari' has also been established in each gram panchayat for dispensation of justice at people's doorstep.

PDS distributors are currently paid Rs 258.40 per quintal as commission in the state.

Yadav also promised Rs 5 lakh interest-free loans to barbers, those engaged in the pottery business and carpenters.

Earlier, Yadav had announced to provide "permanent employee" status to all contractual employees working in different departments of the state government.

Yadav had also announced according "government employee status" to around 2 lakh 'community mobilisers' of 'Jeevika Didis' working in the state. —*PTI*

RJD Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav addresses a press conference at his official residence, in Patna *PHOTO: PTI*

**Their alliance is like 'Mungerilal ke haseen sapne' and it is like 'ek anaar sau bimaar'. Tejashwi Yadav-led Mahagathbandhan will collapse under the weight of its own conflicts and contradictions**

-Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, BJP leader

## 11 JD(U) leaders expelled for anti-party work

PATNA, 26 OCT

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) has expelled 11 leaders, including former minister Shailesh Kumar, for anti-party activities and defying the party's ideology. The expelled members, who also include former MLAs Shyam Bahadur Singh and Sudharshan Kumar and former MLCs Sanjay Prasad and Ranvijay Singh, have had their primary membership suspended. A senior party leader said they were working against JD(U)'s official candidates and NDA allies. Bihar's 243-member assembly will hold polls on 6 and 11 November, with results on 14 November. —*PTI*

## Cong poll campaign to begin after Chhath Puja

PATNA, 26 OCT

The Congress's poll campaign in Bihar will kick off soon after Chhath Puja with Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi canvassing for the INDIA bloc, senior party leader KC Venugopal said on Sunday.

Venugopal, the Congress national general secretary (organisation), said that other party leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and national president Mallikarjun Kharge, will also campaign in the state.

Venugopal and several senior Congress leaders are camping in the state to fine-tune the party's strategy, besides diffusing the crisis in its rank and file, with many workers alleging that tickets were "put up for sale".

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot urge the party workers in Bihar to realise that they are on the cusp of scripting history.

The veteran leader said naming RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav as the INDIA bloc's CM candidate has sent a positive signal.

Training his guns at Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the JD(U) president, Gehlot alleged, "He has sullied his reputation by making too many political about turns... he should reflect on the depths to which he has plunged...."

He accused the BJP of "looting the people", citing the example of electoral bonds, of which it was the biggest beneficiary, until the Supreme Court declared these as "unconstitutional".

The Bihar government transferred Rs 10,000 into accounts of 1 crore women to purchase votes, he said. —*PTI*

# Op Sindoor, Naxalism's end lend colour to festivals: PM

NEW DELHI, 26 OCT

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi extended his greetings for Chhath Pooja on Sunday, emphasising the festival's vibrancy this year owing to the success of Operation Sindoor and efforts to eradicate Maoist violence.

In his 127th edition of the radio programme Mann Ki Baat, Modi described Chhath Puja as a "confluence of devotion, affection and tradition" that exemplifies India's social unity.

"The Mahaparva of Chhath is a reflection of the deep unity between culture, nature, and society. Every section of society comes together at the Chhath ghats," he noted, inviting participation from all the Indians worldwide, "if you get the opportunity, do participate in the Chhath festival."

The Prime Minister stated, "'Operation Sindoor' has filled every Indian with pride. This time around, lamps of joy were lit even in those areas where the darkness of Maoist terror once prevailed," highlighting the desire among citizens for the complete eradication of Maoist threats.

Modi paid tribute to the resolve of Komaram Bheem, a tribal leader who battled oppression under the Nizam of Hyderabad, recalling his defiance against an officer sent to seize farmers' crops.

He urged listeners to learn about the contribution of the-significant figures in tribal history as India prepares to celebrate Janajateeya Gaurav Diwas on 15 November, honouring Bhagwan Birsa Munda.—*PTI*

- In his 127th edition of the radio programme Mann Ki Baat, Modi described Chhath Puja as a "confluence of devotion, affection and tradition" that exemplifies India's social unity.

**'BJP GOVT INSENSITIVE'**

## M'rashtra woman doc's suicide an institutionalised murder: Rahul

NEW DELHI, 26 OCT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has condemned the alleged suicide of a woman government doctor in Maharashtra's Satara district, labelling it "institutionalised murder" that highlights the "inhuman and insensitive" nature of the BJP-led government.

The doctor, from Beed district, was discovered hanging in a hotel room in Phaltan on Thursday night. In a suicide note inscribed on her palm, she accused police sub-inspector Gopal Badane of raping her on several occasions and software engineer Prashant Bankar of mental harassment.

Gandhi expressed sorrow in a Hindi post on X, stating that her death is a tragic reflection of a society's conscience. "Those entrusted with public protection committed the most heinous crime," he said, calling the situation a "despicable" result of a power-protected criminal ideology.

He vowed to support the victim's family in their quest for justice, asserting, "For every daughter of India — no more fear, we need justice."

Badane and Bankar have been arrested in connection with her death, with demands from relatives for capital punishment. —*PTI*

- Gandhi expressed sorrow in a Hindi post on X, stating that her death is a tragic reflection of a society's conscience.

## BJP-AIADMK planning poll win via SIR: Stalin

CHENNAI, 26 OCT

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has accused the BJP-AIADMK alliance of attempting to secure electoral victory through the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which he claims threatens the voting rights of citizens.

In a letter to party workers, Stalin highlighted the Election Commission's announcement to implement SIR in Tamil Nadu next week, drawing parallels to Bihar, where "65 lakh people lost their voting rights."

He asserted, "The BJP and its ally AIADMK are estimating that they can win by removing the names of working-class people, SCs, minorities and women through SIR."

He warned that this strategy reflects a miscalculation in Tamil Nadu, emphasising, "Those who don't have the strength to face people in the electoral field thinking they can win by snatching away people's voting rights."

Stalin reaffirmed the DMK's opposition to SIR, vowing to challenge any undemocratic measures, while dismissing AIADMK leader Palaniswami claims as lies. —*PTI*

## Police arrest 4 militants in Manipur

IMPHAL, 26 OCT

Security forces in Manipur apprehended four militants affiliated with various proscribed groups on Saturday, according to police reports.

Two active members of the banned People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Pro) were arrested in Thoubal district, while another militant from the Kangleipak Communist Party (Taibang Nganba) was detained in Porompat, Imphal East.

Additionally, an active cadre of the Kanglei Yaowl Kanna Lup (KYKL) was nabbed at his residence in Singjamei, Imphal West. Authorities also recovered arms and ammunition from these individuals, including hand grenades. A senior officer was threatened via social media. —*PTI*

## NEP allows states to bring out school books: Kerala

T'PURAM, 26 OCT

Kerala General Education Minister V Sivankutty said on Sunday that the NEP clearly states that the authority to publish school textbooks rests with the states, and therefore, there is no need for any concern in this regard.

Following the state's recent signing of the PM SHRI scheme, the minister defended the General Education Department's move, saying that much of the National Education Policy is already in place in Kerala.

Stating that Kerala would not deviate from the long-standing educational policy of the Left Democratic Front, Sivankutty said BJP leader that school textbooks would not include lessons about RSS leaders.

The matter concerns 47 lakh students in the state, and the government's only priority is to ensure that central funds for students from poor and marginalised communities are not lost.

The minister's office also issues a release containing the Malayalam translation of remarks made by Sanjay Kumar, Union Secretary of School Education and Literacy.

Kumar had said the Centre would sanction funds for Sarva Shiksha Kerala only if the state signed the agreement for the scheme.

The centre had made it clear that the NEP is not a mandatory requirement under the scheme. —*PTI*

## Late Kerala ADM's kin sue 2 for defamation

PATHANAMTHITTA, 26 OCT

The family of additional district magistrate (ADM) Naveen Babu, found dead at his official residence in Kannur last October, has filed a defamation suit against two individuals over false bribery allegations.

The suit names former District Panchayat President **PP Divya** and **TV Prasanthan,** a petrol pump licence applicant, seeking Rs 65 lakh in compensation.

Babu allegedly took his own life after being publicly humiliated, with Divya reportedly levelling corruption charges against him during his farewell function.

Prasanthan had accused Babu of delaying a no-objection certificate for a petrol pump and granting it after taking a bribe,

He however was unable to provide evidence during the investigation.

The defamation case, filed at the Pathanamthitta Sub Court, is set for hearing on 11 November.

The former additional district magistrate's family hopes that new evidence may emerge through the proceeding, potentially aiding the ongoing police investigation, in which the police have charged Divya with abetment of suicide. —*PTI*

## Converted stay Hindu on paper for quota: VHP leader

PRAYAGRAJ, 26 OCT

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Sunday expressed concern over the so-called 'crypto-Christians' in the country, claiming that such individuals do not change their official records after conversion to avail reservation benefits.

VHP General Secretary (organisation) Milind Parande noted that neither the government nor society is aware of their conversion and only the Church knows their true religious affiliation.

He alleged that the Church has adopted a strategy of not changing the names of converts, so that conversions remain hidden.

Parande said, "When the VHP examines voter lists, some villages show no Christians at all — yet there are multiple churches there.... Who are going to these churches them?" —*PTI*

**DIGITALISING JUDICIARY**

## *UK interested in India's e-courts project*

NEW DELHI, 26 OCT

The United Kingdom has evinced interest in the e-Courts project that seeks to digitise entire court records, and a delegation from that country would be in the national capital next week to interact with top Union law ministry officials.

The ambitious e-Courts project is currently in its third phase with an aim to upgrade the digital infrastructure of subordinate judiciary across the country.

A delegation from the United Kingdom will visit the Department of Justice here on 6 November to interact with top officials and members of the Supreme Court's e-committee.

The e-committee is the governing body charged with overseeing the e-Courts Project conceptualised under the "National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary-2005".

Under phase three, 3,108 crore documents will be digitised. The system will be migrated to cloud technology and the cost estimated for providing 25 petabytes of cloud storage is Rs 1,205.20 crore.

The project also seeks to establish and expand the scope of virtual courts for hearing of cases by creating a robust digital infrastructure. 1,150 visual courts worth Rs 413.08 crores will be established.

The project also involves integration of duty holders such as courts, jails, police stations and forensic laboratories with the Inter Operable Criminal Justice System.

Digitisation of court records also enables processes to become more environment friendly by minimising paper-based filings and reducing the physical movement of documents.

Virtual participation in proceedings can reduce costs associated with court proceedings such as travel expenses for witnesses, judges, and other stakeholders, while payment of court fees, fines and penalties can be made from anywhere and anytime of the day. —*PTI*

## 3 apprehended for threatening judge in MP

**ANUPPUR, 26 OCT**

Three men were arrested Sunday for allegedly threatening Judicial Magistrate Amandeep Singh Chhabra, damaging property, and pelting stones at his residence in Bhalumada, Anuppur, Madhya Pradesh, police said. The attack was reportedly revenge after the magistrate denied the bail plea of one accused months earlier. Around 12.30am Saturday, the group damaged a gate lamp and iron fixtures, throwing stones into the courtyard before fleeing, said SP Moti-ur Rehman. The arrested, Priyanshu Singh alias Jaguar (25), Devendra Kewat (23), and Manikesh Singh (19), were reportedly drunk. Priyanshu is a habitual offender. The MP High Court directed Principal District Judge Maya Vishwalal to visit the magistrate at his residence. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

## Fake antacid mfg unit busted in Delhi, 2 arrested

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Delhi Police have busted a counterfeit antacid manufacturing unit in north Delhi's Ibrahimpur, arresting two men and seizing over 91,000 fake sachets. The accused, identified as Sandeep Jain, 45, and Jitender alias Chotu, 23, were allegedly producing spurious ENO antacids using counterfeit packaging and raw materials. Acting on a complaint from the authorised manufacturer, the Crime Branch raided the premises and recovered 91,257 sachets, 80 kg of raw material, company-printed rolls, stickers, and a filling machine. Police said the products were ready for market distribution. Both suspects have been remanded in custody for two days. Authorities said the operation reflects a probable wider counterfeit trade market. *—Agencies*

## Green tax on vehicles entering U'khand from Dec

**DEHRADUN, 26 OCT**

The Government of Uttarakhand will impose a green tax on vehicles entering the state from December to curb pollution and promote conservation, officials said. The levy will range from Rs 80 for small vehicles, Rs 250 for light cargo, Rs 140 for buses, and Rs 120 – Rs 700 for trucks, depending on weight. Additional Transport Commissioner Sanat Kumar Singh said that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras at border check-posts will detect vehicles and auto-deduct the tax through the NPCI system. The state has 37 cameras, up from 16, and a vendor firm will manage the collection and ensure timely deposits to the transport department.*—PTI*

## Assam Rifles empowers Ollo tribal women

**ITANAGAR, 26 OCT**

The Khonsa Battalion of Assam Rifles has launched a skill-based initiative to empower women of the Ollo tribe in Tirap district, Arunachal Pradesh, under Operation Sadbhavana. On Saturday, sewing machines were distributed to women in Lazu village to promote financial self-reliance and support sustainable livelihoods. The machines will enable tailoring and cottage industries, helping families earn a steady income and contributing to the local economy. The initiative also aims to foster peace, development and inclusive growth in insurgency-affected Tirap. The event was attended by senior Assam Rifles officials, Lazu Police officers, village chiefs and gaon buras.

The Ollo, a small tribe of around 1,500 people, are known for their clan-based system and traditional facial tattoos. *—PTI*

# Drunk bikers caused tragic Andhra bus fire: Police

### Reckless drivers skid on muddy patch before being hit by bus

**KURNOOL, 26 OCT**

Andhra Pradesh police on Sunday confirmed that the two motorcyclists linked to the Bengaluru-bound bus fire, which killed 20 passengers, were drunk at the time of the accident.

As per the police report, in the early hours of 24 October, the sleeper bus ran over a two-wheeler that had already met with an accident at Chinna Tekuru village in Kurnool district.

The impact dragged the motorcycle beneath the bus, triggering a fuel tank explosion and engulfing the vehicle in flames. The bus was carrying 44 passengers, of whom several managed to escape.

Kurnool Range DIG Koya Praveen said forensic tests confirmed that the bike riders, Siva Shankar and Erri Swamy, were intoxicated. "We had suspected this earlier but waited for forensic confirmation," he said.

Police said the duo, after dining at a dhaba, had filled petrol around 2.24am near the Kia car showroom. A viral video showed Shankar riding rashly. Soon after, the bike skidded on a wet road, killing Shankar instantly.

Swamy, while checking on him, saw the bus ram and drag the bike, leading to the blaze.

Panic-stricken, he fled to his native village before being traced and questioned.

Following the tragedy, Telangana transport authorities intensified checks on private operators.

A total of 14 cases were registered for safety and fitness violations, collecting fines worth Rs 46,000. Nearly 500 inter-state private buses ply from Hyderabad daily.

Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said he would meet his Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka counterparts to enhance safety norms and warned bus owners of strict action for overspeeding or failing to maintain vehicle fitness. *—PTI*

The wreckage of the charred sleeper bus following a tragic fire in Kurnool district in the wee hours of Friday. (Right) The motorcyclist, that lead to the blaze accident, is seen on CCTV footage, driving recklessly *PHOTO: PTI*

**Drunk drivers are terrorists. Period. Their actions are nothing short of acts of terror on our roads**

-VC Sajjanar, CP, Hyderabad

Indian Coast Guard reach out to fishermen, asking to return to the shores amid possibility of a cyclone developing over Bay of Bengal *PHOTO: PTI*

# Andhra braces for cyclone Montha

**AMARAVATI, 26 OCT**

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday said the deep depression over the Bay of Bengal is set to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm, posing a threat to Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal in the coming days.

Moving west-northwest at 10 kmph, the system is likely to become a cyclonic storm by Monday and a severe cyclone by 28 October, making landfall near Kakinada, between Machilipatnam and Kalingapatnam, with wind speeds of 90–100 kmph, gusting to 110 kmph.

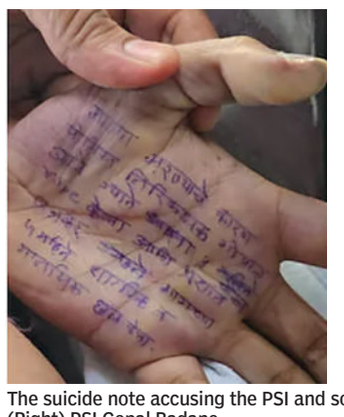
Odisha has placed all 30 districts on alert, issuing red warnings for Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati, and Ganjam.

Evacuations are underway in vulnerable areas, schools and Anganwadis are shut till 30 October, and Puri beaches are closed to tourists.

In West Bengal, heavy rain is forecast from 28–31 October across southern and northern districts, including Kolkata, Medinipur, Howrah, and Jalpaiguri.

Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan chaired a National Crisis Management Committee meeting where states reported readiness with evacuation, response teams, and measures. *—Agencies*

# PSI arrested in Satara doc's rape-suicide case



The suicide note accusing the PSI and software engineer Prashant Bankar. (Right) PSI Gopal Badane *PHOTO: ANI*

**PUNE/SATARA, 26 OCT**

Police have arrested Sub-Inspector Gopal Badane in connection with the alleged suicide of the woman government doctor in Maharashtra's Satara district, officials said on Sunday.

Badane surrendered at the Phaltan Rural Police Station on Saturday evening and will be produced before a local court. Software engineer Prashant Bankar, who was arrested earlier from Pune, has been remanded in police custody for four days. Both face charges of rape and abetment to suicide.

The doctor, posted at a government hospital in Satara and hailing from Beed district, was found hanging in a hotel room in Phaltan on Thursday night. In a note written on her palm, she accused Badane of repeatedly raping her and Bankar of mental harassment. Badane was suspended following his arrest.

Family members alleged she faced political and police pressure to alter post-mortem reports and had complained about harassment multiple times. The Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) condemned her death and demanded an impartial investigation.

"This is a very serious issue. No one will be spared. Strict action will be taken," Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis said. *—PTI*

# SC to hear Khalid, Imam's pleas

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

The Supreme Court will on Monday hear the bail pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulfisha Fatima, and Meeran Haider in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) case linked to the alleged conspiracy behind the February 2020 Delhi riots.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria is scheduled to hear the matter.

The top court had earlier, on 22 September, issued notice to the Delhi Police seeking its response.

The activists have challenged the Delhi High Court's 2 September order denying bail to nine accused, including Khalid and Imam.

The court had said 'conspiratorial' violence under the guise of protests could not be permitted, noting that the right to protest is not absolute and must remain within legal limits.

The accused, booked under UAPA and the erstwhile Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, have been in custody since 2020 for allegedly masterminding the riots that killed 53 people and over 700 injured. *—PTI*

Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam *PHOTO: PTI*

## 21 maoists surrender in Chhattisgarh

**KANKAR, 26 OCT**

As many as 21 Maoist cadres, including 13 women, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Sunday, handing over 18 weapons to authorities, police said. They laid down arms under the "Poona Margem: Rehabilitation through Reintegration" initiative launched by the Bastar Range Police.

The group includes Division Committee Secretary Mukesh, four divisional committee members, nine area committee members, and eight lower-rung cadres of the Kuemari/Kiskodo Area Committee under the Keshkal Division (North Sub-Zonal Bureau) of the CPI (Maoist). The surrendered weapons include three AK-47s, two INSAS rifles, four SLRs, six .303 rifles, two single-shot rifles, and a Barrel Grenade Launcher (BGL). This is the latest in a series of major surrenders. On October 17, 210 Naxalites, including Central Committee member Rupesh alias Satish, gave up arms in Jagdalpur, while 103 surrendered in Bijapur on 2 October. *—PTI*

# Gangster Lakhvinder's deportation from US is major success: H'yana DGP

**CHANDIGARH, 26 OCT**

Haryana's DGP O P Singh hailed the deportation of fugitive gangster Lakhvinder alias Lakha from the US on Saturday as a major win for the state's Special Task Force (STF) against organised crime. Lakhvinder was arrested at IGI Airport, Delhi, in a coordinated operation with the CBI.

"Another coward, fugitive, and traitor dragged back from America by Haryana Police," Singh said. Lakhvinder, from Titram village, Kaithal, is linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and has been operating from the US since 2022 under Anmol Bishnoi.

He is accused in about a dozen extortion and firing cases across Haryana and Punjab.

A Look Out Circular and Red Corner Notice were issued against him in 2023 and 2024.

The STF reaffirmed its commitment to dismantling organised crime networks and tracking, apprehending, and deporting wanted criminals abroad. *—PTI*

Gangster Lakhvinder *PHOTO: PTI*

# Sabarimala case: SIT returns after evidence collection

**PATHANAMTHITTA, 26 OCT**

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged loss of gold from Sabarimala temple returned to Kerala on Sunday after collecting evidence in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in the presence of prime accused Unnikrishnan Potty, police sources said.

Potty was taken to Ballari, Bengaluru, and Chennai for verification before the team returned to the Crime Branch office in Thiruvananthapuram.

On Friday, the SIT searched the jewellery shop of Govardhan, who reportedly funded the gold-plating work of the temple's sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum) door frame, officially sponsored by Potty.

Searches were also held at Potty's Bengaluru residence and Smart Creation office in Chennai, where gold-plated copper plates for the temple's dwarapalaka idols were made in 2019.

The Ranni Judicial First Class Magistrate Court has granted SIT custody of Potty until 30 October.

Officials said seized articles would soon be presented before the court.

Meanwhile, the court issued a warrant to produce former Sabarimala administrative officer B Murari Babu on 28 October, following the SIT's plea for custody. Babu was arrested last week.

In a parallel process, Justice KT Sankaran (Retd) continued the Kerala High Court–mandated inspection of the temple's main strongroom at Aranmula to inventory valuables, including gold.

The Travancore Devaswom Board said the strongroom houses all offerings made by devotees. *—PTI*

## DELHI: PHASE 2 TO CURB AIR POLLUTION

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Sunday launched the second phase of its mist sprayer project along Shanti Path and Africa Avenue to curb rising air pollution. The expansion follows a successful first phase at Lodhi Road, officials said.

NDMC Chairperson Kuljeet Singh Chahal said Delhi's air quality remains "very poor," prompting intensified efforts for dust suppression, smog control, greenery, and public awareness. Mist sprayers mounted on electric poles release fine treated-water droplets to settle pollutants and water roadside plants.

30 poles with five nozzles each cover 850m of Africa Avenue, while 32 poles span 900m on Shanti Path. Each uses 84 litres/hour from storage tanks. The third phase will cover 24 major roads for Rs 15 crore. *—PTI*

**TRAGEDY STRIKES KERALA**

# *Mudslide flattens homes in Idukki, 1 dead*

**IDUKKI, 26 OCT**

A 48-year-old man was killed and his wife seriously injured when a mudslide flattened eight houses at Mannamkandam in Adimali, Idukki district, late on Saturday.

Police identified the victim as Biju, of Lakshamveedu Unnathi. He and his wife Sandhya were trapped when mud from a nearby hillside collapsed around 10.30pm. After a five-hour rescue operation, both were pulled from the debris; Biju succumbed to his injuries, while Sandhya remains in hospital in Aluva, where her condition is stable.

The landslide occurred near the site of NH-85 widening works. Local authorities had warned of possible slips earlier in the day, moving 25 families to relief camps. The couple had reportedly returned home briefly to prepare food when the slide struck, crushing several houses within minutes.

- Local authorities had warned of possible slips earlier in the day, moving 25 families to relief camps

Residents accused contractors of unsafe hill cutting for the highway project. "They are removing soil without safety precautions or retaining walls," said a local resident, adding that repeated complaints had gone unheeded.

The NHAI said it had already filed a report on 22 October warning of the danger and recommending evacuation.

It added that no construction activity was under way at the time of the collapse and that traffic movement had been suspended as a precaution.

Minister Roshy Augustine and others visited the scene on Sunday.

An emergency meeting decided to relocate 44 families to government housing *—PTI*

Rescue operation underway after multiple houses collapsed following a mudslide, at Adimali in Idukki district in the state of Kerala on Saturday night *PHOTO: PTI*

# Aussie players' molester has a criminal past

**INDORE, 26 OCT**

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Rajesh Dandotiya on Sunday provided an update on the investigation into the alleged molestation and stalking of two Australian women cricketers in Indore.

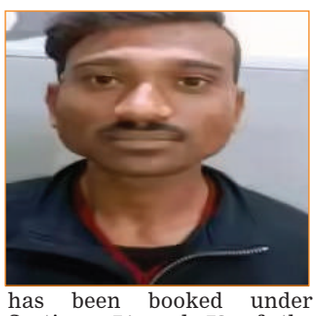
The prime suspect, Aqueel Sheikh, arrested after a six-hour operation, has a prior criminal record and was remanded to police custody for two days.

The incident occurred on 23 October, when the players left their team hotel to visit a café ahead of their match against South Africa.

During this time, they were allegedly "inappropriately touched."

An FIR was lodged by the Australian team's management security following the complaint.

Sheikh is a resident of the Azadnagar area in Indore and has been booked under Sections 74 and 78 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.



MIG Police Station in-charge CB Singh said, "Investigations are underway, and we are examining possible lapses in security protocols."

Police are reviewing CCTV footage from the café and surrounding areas and interviewing staff to identify any accomplices.

Authorities are coordinating with the Australian team's security personnel to ensure the players' safety and to expedite the investigation. *—PTI*

## HIDING YAMUNA POLLUTION?

Every year during Chhath pooja, the Yamuna river gets covered by a layer of foam, raising concerns about the health issues and the rising level of pollution. This year, Delhi is releasing more water and using chemical defrothing methods to clean the water. Experts say that these methods will only provide a temporary solution. The foam is a reaction caused by the toxins and organic matter, like industrial waste and sewage, released into the water

***PHOTO: PTI***

# India met with growing mistrust after Ladakh protest

After years of unfulfilled promises and rising anger, violent protests erupted in Ladakh, a remote region in the Himalayas. Locals say they feel abandoned, while New Delhi faces growing mistrust.

On a cold afternoon in Leh, the capital city of Ladakh, India, the district court was unusually crowded.

About 39 men stood in the open, talking in low voices — a rare sight in a region where crime rates are among the country's lowest.

They were arrested on charges of violence during last month's deadly protests, which called for greater autonomy and statehood for the Buddhist-Muslim enclave in the Himalayas, which borders both China and Pakistan.

Protesters are also demanding job quotas for local residents and special status for Ladakh that would allow the creation of elected local bodies to protect its tribal areas.

While the men have since been released on bail, they share a deep sense of uncertainty.

Among them was Thinles Dorje, a man with a fearless look on his face. As others hesitated to speak, Dorje stepped forward, saying loudly, "It's time to break the silence."

Dorje said he was arrested while returning home from work. He denies taking part in the violence but admits that the anger in Ladakh has been simmering for years.

Standing next to Thinles Dorje was Tundup Namgyal, a former soldier, who alleged that during his questioning by the Ladakh police, he was asked about "Chinese and Pakistani funding" and even claimed to have been called "anti-national" by authorities — a label that has left many in the region angry and hurt.

Dorje and others expressed their frustration over being accused of colluding with foreign elements.

Locals told DW that almost every family has supported the armed forces, by carrying supplies or providing vital border intelligence, for example.

Police personnel during a massive protest over the statehood demand and the inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule, in Leh on 24 September

***PHOTO: ANI***

### WHY IS LADAKH PROTESTING?

The roots of the current discontent go back to 2019, when the India's Hindu-nationalist government revoked the special autonomous status of the nearby Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The move carved out Ladakh as a separate union territory, which means it is directly governed by the Indian central government in New Delhi.

The locals in Buddhist-majority Leh celebrated this move, hoping it would bring autonomy and development.

However, after a few years, the excitement faded as promises failed to materialize, leading to widespread unemployment. The unmet promises eventually fueled the protests on September 24.

At the office of Leh Apex Body, the main group campaigning for Ladakh's autonomy, members said New Delhi's "negligence" and "unfulfilled promises" have deepened mistrust.

### PROTESTS TURN DEADLY

India's Ministry of Home Affairs said the September 24 demonstrations were triggered by "provocative" speeches by climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who had been on hunger strike since September 10.

This led to a call by organizers for a local shutdown with protesters taking to the streets.

Angry about what protesters described as government "indifference," the demonstrations turned violent.

Mobs set fire to government buildings, including the local office of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Leh. Officials said a police vehicle was also torched and that more than 30 police and personnel were injured. Locals say security forces opened fire, leaving four people dead and dozens injured.

Wangchuk is in jail accused of inciting violence under the National Security Act — a charge he strongly denies.

Soon after the violence, a curfew and internet shutdown brought Leh to a standstill, and dozens of people were detained on charges of rioting and arson.

### LOCALS FEAR GROWING ALIENATION

Ladakh sits on India's northern frontier bordering China and Pakistan. Analysts warn that New Delhi's approach risks alienating the very population that acts as its first line of defense.

"Any sense of alienation should be addressed immediately — trust is the foundation," said Siddiq Wahid, a historian and political analyst.

Many locals say while the region plays a critical role in India's national security, its people remain politically voiceless, a contradiction that fuels both anger and despair.

In 2020, Indian and Chinese soldiers clashed hand-to-hand in the Galwan Valley, leaving casualties on both sides. The incident marked one of the deadliest confrontations between the two neighbors in over four decades and underscored Ladakh's strategic vulnerability.

At the Ladakh police headquarters, a meeting was underway between government officials and local representatives. DW made attempts to speak with the director general responsible for security. He declined to comment, and DW's request for an interview with the lieutenant governor, New Delhi's representative in the region, was also turned down.

Tashi Gyalson, the BJP representative in Ladakh and the chief executive councilor of a local autonomous body, acknowledged the public frustration.

Back at home, Thinles Dorje sat with his wife and daughter, sharing his experiences at the court. He said he is worried but resolute.

"All our demands are for the future — for my children and the generations after them," said Dorje, looking at his daughter. *—DW News*

# SALAR

## What is Turkey's role in Gaza ceasefire plan?

Israel doesn't like it, but US President Donald Trump has brought Turkey into Gaza ceasefire planning anyway. What role can the country play, and what advantages can it expect from getting involved?

It feels as though, for now, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a favorite of his US counterpart, Donald Trump. Meeting the US president in the Oval Office can be a risky undertaking — one never knows what sort of greeting one might get — but it hasn't been a problem for Erdogan, yet. For weeks, Trump has been talking about the 71-year-old Turkish leader in glowing terms.

At the meeting on the Gaza ceasefire held in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh on 13 October , Trump placed the Turkish president in the first row. He was one of the handful of leaders to sign a statement in support of the Gaza ceasefire, alongside Trump and others from Egypt and Qatar. And Trump once again emphasized the sentiment that Erdogan was a good friend of his.

A destroyed building in Gaza

***PHOTO: PTI***

### ISRAEL: NO TURKISH TROOPS IN GAZA

US Vice President JD Vance held a similar attitude during his recent visit to Israel. There, he noted that Turkey had played a very constructive role in resolving the Middle East conflict so far, and that this could be expected to continue.

This puts the US somewhat at odds with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet. They hold a much more negative opinion of Erdogan due his perceived closeness to the Gaza-based militant group Hamas and nonstop, harsh criticism of Israel's conduct in Gaza.

That came out at the joint press conference held by Netanyahu and Vance this week. When asked what he thought about Turkish troops potentially being part of an "international stabilisation force" in Gaza, Netanyahu replied: "I have very strong opinions about that. You want to guess what they are?"

It's true that over the past two years, Turkish-Israeli relations have deteriorated markedly.

Ankara has accused Israel's government of committing a genocide in Gaza and Erdogan himself has described Netanyahu as the "butcher of Gaza." He's also called Hamas "a liberation movement."

Unverified reports in the Turkish media suggest Ankara has granted refuge to Hamas members and their families.

The Palestinian militant group is considered a terrorist organisation by not only Israel, but Germany, the US and several other countries. There are Hamas members in Turkey — some are there as the result of an earlier prisoner swap with Israel — and other Hamas members are known to visit Turkey regularly.

### TURKEY: FROM SIDELINES TO FRONT

In terms of negotiating with Hamas, the US already has Qatar to work with.

Hamas' political leadership is based in Qatar.

The fact that Trump also brought Turkey into the equation — despite Israel's opposition — is the result of Ankara's strategic positioning, said Hakki Tas, a research fellow who specialises in Turkey and Egypt at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies, or GIGA.

Trump wants to resolve this issue at the lowest possible military and economic cost to his own country, Tas said.

And the Turkish government is one of the few actors that can exert indirect pressure on Netanyahu through its policies while simultaneously influencing Hamas, he added.

Turkey is also a NATO member with close ties to the West, a key military player and has plenty of experience providing humanitarian aid and logistics for reconstruction in the Gaza Strip.

Turkish construction companies are some of the largest in the world.

Many of them have been supported by Erdogan's generous government contracts over the past two decades.

Playing a part in the Gaza ceasefire also gives Erdogan geopolitical clout, Tas explained, especially in relation to an ever-weaker Hamas and an increasingly unpopular Israel.

Tayyip Erdogan

***PHOTO: PTI***

### MILITARY MOVES IN GAZA TOO RISKY

The ceasefire in Gaza continues to look fragile. Meanwhile, Ankara is focusing on Syria, even though it also wants to remain an important actor in Gaza.

There's no way Turkey can bring about a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially when it comes to a two-state solution, said Yildirm. Turkey alone cannot make Palestine a universally recognized state, nor can it allay Israel's security fears. But what it can do is bring conflict parties and other stakeholders to the table.

GIGA's Tas isn't sure whether Turkey can maintain that role in the medium or long-term. There are too many potential fault lines: Israel's violation of international law in the Palestinian territories, potential disagreements with Egypt, the US Congress' restrictive approach to dealing with Erdogan and even divisions within Hamas, to name a few. All of these could dilute Turkey's influence.

This is why, Tas said, he expects Turkey to focus primarily on humanitarian and logistical issues in Gaza. Political and military topics are seen as too high-risk for Ankara. *—DW News*

## LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

# *Light pollution, a major disruption for humans' internal lunar clock*

Most animals, including humans, carry an internal lunar clock, tuned to the 29.5-day rhythm of the Moon. It guides sleep, reproduction and migration of many species.

But in the age of artificial light, that ancient signal is fading – washed out by the glow of cities, screens and satellites.

Just as the circadian rhythm keeps time with the 24-hour rotation of the Earth, many organisms also track the slower rhythm of the Moon.

Both systems rely on light cues, and a recent study analysing women's menstrual cycles shows that as the planet brightens from artificial light, the natural contrasts that once structured biological time are being blurred.

Plenty of research suggests the lunar cycle still influences human sleep. A 2021 study found that in Toba (also known as Qom) Indigenous communities in Argentina, people went to bed 30-80 minutes later and slept 20-90 minutes less in the three-to-five nights before the full Moon.

Similar, though weaker, patterns appeared among more than 400 Seattle students in the same study, even amid the city's heavy light pollution. This suggests that electric light may dampen but not erase this lunar effect.

The researchers found that sleep patterns varied not only with the full-Moon phase but also with the new- and half-Moon phases. This 15-day rhythm may reflect the influence of the Moon's changing gravitational pull, which peaks twice per lunar month, during both the full and new Moons, when the Sun, Earth and Moon align.

Such gravitational cycles could subtly affect biological rhythms alongside light-related cues.

Laboratory studies have supported these findings. In a 2013 experiment, during the full Moon phase, participants took about five minutes longer to fall asleep, slept 20 minutes less, and secreted less melatonin (a hormone that helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle). They also showed a 30 per cent reduction in EEG slow-wave brain activity – an indicator of deep sleep.

Their sleep was monitored over several weeks, covering a lunar cycle. The participants also reported poorer sleep quality around the full Moon, despite being unaware that their data was being analysed against lunar phases.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of a lunar rhythm in humans comes from the recent study analysing long-term menstrual records of 176 women across Europe and the US.

The researchers found that sleep patterns varied not only with the full-Moon phase but also with the new- and half-Moon phases

***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Before around 2010 – when LED lighting and smartphone use became widespread – many women's menstrual cycles tended to begin around the full Moon or new Moon phases. Afterwards, that synchrony largely vanished, persisting only in January, when the Moon-Sun-Earth gravitational effects are strongest.

The researchers propose that humans may still have an internal Moon clock, but that its coupling to lunar phases has been weakened by artificial lighting.

### A METRONOME FOR OTHER SPECIES

The Moon acts as a metronome for other species. For example, coral reefs coordinate mass spawning events with precision, releasing eggs and sperm under specific phases of the Moonlight.

In a 2016 laboratory study, researchers working with reef-building corals replaced the natural night light cycle with regimes of constant light or constant darkness.

They found that the normal cycling of clock genes (such as the cryptochromes) was flattened or lost, and the release of sperm and eggs fell out of sync.

These findings suggest lunar light cues are integral to the genetic and physiological rhythms that underlie synchronised reproduction.

Other species, such as the marine midge Clunio marinus, use an internal "coincidence detector" that integrates circadian and lunar signals to time their reproduction precisely with low tides.

Genetic studies have shown this lunar timing is linked to several clock-related genes – suggesting that the influence of lunar cycles extends down to the molecular level.

However, a 2019 study found that the synchrony of wild coral spawning is breaking down. Scientists think this may be due to pollutants and rising sea temperatures, as well as light pollution.

But we know that light pollution is causing disruption for many wildlife species that use the Moon to navigate or time their movements.

### NEAR-PERMANENT BRIGHTNESS

For most of human history, moonlight was the brightest light of night. Today, it competes with an artificial glow visible from space. According to the World Atlas of Artificial Night Sky Brightness, more than 80 per cent of the global population – and nearly everyone in Europe and the US – live under a light-polluted sky (one that is bright enough to hide the Milky Way).

In some countries, such as Singapore or Kuwait, there is literally nowhere without significant light pollution. Constant sky-glow from dense urban lighting keeps the sky so bright that night never becomes truly dark.

This near-permanent brightness is a by-product of these countries' high population density, extensive outdoor illumination, and the reflection of light off buildings and the atmosphere.

In cognitive neuroscience, time perception is often described by pacemaker–accumulator models, in which an internal "pacemaker" emits regular pulses that the brain counts to estimate duration.

Losing the slow, monthly cue of moonlight may mean that our internal clocks now run in a flatter temporal landscape, with fewer natural fluctuations to anchor them.

The lunar clock still ticks within us – faint but measurable. It shapes tides, sleep and the rhythms of countless species.

Yet as the night sky brightens, we risk losing not only the stars, but the quiet cadence that once linked life on Earth to the turning of the Moon. *—PTI*

**WORDS of WISDOM**

AI, particularly generative AI — I am not interested, nor will I ever be interested... I'd rather die

-Guillermo del Toro, Oscar-winning filmmaker

# Thailand, Cambodia sign truce deal; Trump co-signs

## US hints at extending trade truce with China ahead of Xi meet

**KUALA LUMPUR, 26 OCT**

Thailand and Cambodia signed an expanded ceasefire agreement on Sunday during a ceremony attended by US President Donald Trump, whose threats of economic pressure prodded the two nations to halt skirmishes along their disputed border earlier this year. Trump co-signed the deal.

Thailand will release Cambodian prisoners, and Cambodia will begin withdrawing heavy artillery as part of the first phase of the deal. "We did something that a lot of people said couldn't be done," he said. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet called it a "historic day," and Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said the agreement creates "the building blocks for a lasting peace."

Cambodian PM Hun Manet, Thailand's PM Anutin Charnvirakul & US President Donald Trump at the ceasefire deal in Malaysia **PHOTO: PTI**

Some of the worst modern fighting between the two countries took place over five days in July, killing dozens and displacing hundreds of people. Trump threatened, at the time, to withhold trade agreements unless the fighting stopped. A shaky truce has persisted since then.

The ceremony was Trump's first event after arriving at the annual summit of Association of Southeast Asian Nations, hosted in Kuala Lumpur. The trip will continue with visits to Japan and South Korea and a potential meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent suggested Sunday that Washington and Beijing could step back from their confrontation instead of pushing forward with higher tariffs by America and export restrictions on rare earth elements by China.

When asked if the two countries could extend the trade truce from earlier this year, Bessent said: "I would say yes." However, he emphasised that the final decision would be up to Trump.

Trump signed economic agreements with Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia, some of them aimed at increasing trade involving critical minerals. Meanwhile, ASEAN welcomed East Timor as its newest member Sunday. *—PTI*

### Trump dances on landing in Malaysia

Trump touched down in the Malaysian capital around 0200 GMT and then performed his trademark campaign trail dance while local performers and waved an American flag in one hand and a Malaysian flag in the other.

### Cambodia backs Trump for Nobel

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet nominated Trump for a Nobel Peace Prize, for the latter's efforts in brokering a ceasefire between Phnom Penh and Thailand. On Sunday, Hun said the nomination represents "the gratitude of the Cambodian people" for Trump's leadership.

### Trump praises Pak's Shariff

Trump hailed Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Asim Munir as "great people", and vowed to "quickly" resolve the Pak-Afghanistan conflict. "But I'll get that solved very quickly. I know them both. And the Pakistan Field Marshal, and the Prime Minister are great people," he said.

**ANTI-TARIFF TV AD**

## 'Canada to face 10% more tariffs due to ad'

**WASHINGTON, 26 OCT**

President Donald Trump said on Saturday that he plans to hike tariffs on imports of Canadian goods by an extra 10 per cent because of an anti-tariff television ad aired by the province of Ontario.

The ad used the words of former president Ronald Reagan to criticise US tariffs, angering Trump who said he would end trade talks with Canada. Ontario Premier Doug Ford said he would pull the ad after the weekend, and it ran Friday night during the first game of the World Series.

"Their Advertisement was to be taken down, IMMEDIATELY, but they let it run last night during the World Series, knowing that it was a FRAUD," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform as he flew aboard Air Force One to Malaysia.

"Because of their serious misrepresentation of the facts, and hostile act, I am increasing the Tariff on Canada by 10 per cent over and above what they are paying now."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on when the 10 per cent hike would come into effect, and whether it would apply to all Canadian goods. *—PTI*

## 1 dead in shooting at historically Black US University; 6 injuredy

**PHILADELPHIA, 26 OCT**

At least one person was killed and six others injured in a shooting at Pennsylvania's Lincoln University Saturday night, according to authorities.

The Chester County District Attorney's Office stated that law enforcement is currently investigating the incident.

Specific details regarding the condition of the victims have not been disclosed.

In response to the situation, authorities have urged the public to avoid the area.

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro shared on X that he had been briefed on the shooting, extending full support from his administration to the university and local law enforcement. "Join Lori and me in praying for the Lincoln University community," he stated. Lincoln University is a historically Black institution. *—Agencies*

## Japan unveils new cargo spacecraft to supply ISS

**TOKYO, 26 OCT**

Japan's space agency JAXA on Sunday successfully launched its most powerful H3 rocket, carrying the new HTV-X1 unmanned cargo spacecraft on its first mission to deliver supplies to the International Space Station (ISS). The rocket lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Centre and entered orbit 14 minutes later. The craft is expected to reach ISS within days, where Japanese astronaut Kimiya Yui will capture it using a robotic arm. The HTV-X, successor to H-II Transfer Vehicle, can carry heavier payloads and remain docked for up to six months. JAXA Chief Hiroshi Yamakawa hailed it as "a major step forward" *—PTI*

## Kurdish PKK withdraws fighters from Turkey to Iraq

**ISTANBUL, 26 OCT**

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a militant Kurdish group, announced on Sunday that it is withdrawing its fighters from Turkey to Iraq as part of an ongoing peace initiative with the Turkish government. This announcement follows months after a ceremony where some PKK fighters laid down their arms symbolically. The PKK has been engaged in a decades-long insurgency in Turkey , resulting in tens of thousands of deaths since 1980s. KCK executive board member Sabri Ok said, "We are currently withdrawing all our forces within Turkey to the Medya Defence Area with Abdullah Ocalan's approval,". *—PTI*

## 3 die in Haiti as Hurricane Melissa intensifies

**KINGSTON, 26 OCT**

Hurricane Melissa has rapidly escalated to a Category 3 storm, unleashing torrential rain across the northern Caribbean and posing significant flooding risks for Jamaica and southern Haiti. Prime Minister Andrew Holness urged Jamaicans to "take this weather threat seriously" as the hurricane, with maximum sustained winds of 185kph, is expected to strengthen further before making landfall. The storm is forecasted to bring up to 30 inches of rain, with three fatalities reported in Haiti and damage to nearly 200 homes in the Dominican Republic. Authorities have activated over 650 shelters. *—PTI*

## Indian woman stabs husband over messy house, held

**RALEIGH, 26 OCT**

A 44-year-old Indian-origin teacher assistant, Chandraprabha Singh, has been arrested in Charlotte, North Carolina, for allegedly stabbing her husband, Arvind Singh, during an argument over household chores. According to an arrest warrant cited by WBTV, the incident occurred on 12 October at their apartment on Foxhaven Drive. Police said She has been charged with assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury. Arvind Singh told police his wife became angry about the messy house and attacked him. She claimed it was accidental, saying she "turned around while holding a knife." *—Agencies*

## Pak, Afghan continue 2nd round of peace talks

**ISLAMABAD, 26 OCT**

Pakistan and Afghanistan held the second round of talks in Istanbul to establish a joint monitoring and oversight mechanism to curb terrorist movements across the border even as Islamabad warned that war was still an option if talks failed to address its chief concern about terrorism.

Dozens of soldiers, civilians and terrorists were killed in clashes earlier this month, creating a war like situation but peace was restored temporarily on 19 Oct after the two sides held talks -- facilitated by Qatar and Turkey -- in Doha.

Radio Pakistan quoted official sources saying that the discussions were focused on establishing a joint monitoring and oversight mechanism to curb cross-border terrorist movements and addressing trade barriers. Geo News reported that Pakistan handed over a comprehensive counterterrorism plan to Afghan Taliban during the second round of talks between the two sides.

Separately, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, speaking to reporters in his home town of Sialkot, warned of an "all-out war" with the Afghan Taliban regime if the talks failed.*—PTI*

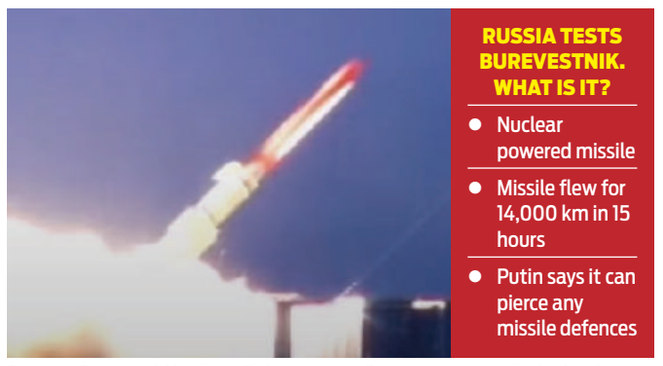
## Russia tests nuke-powered missile for 15 hrs

**MOSCOW/KYIV, 26 OCT**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday announced the successful test of a unique nuclear powered 'Burevestnik' cruise missile with unlimited range and ordered the armed forces to prepare infrastructure for its deployment.

Putin, in his televised meeting with the chief of defence staff and other military commanders, said the 'Burevestnik' cruise was in the air for 15 hours and covered 14,000 kilometres during successful trials.

As the Supreme Commander of Russia's Armed Forces, Putin visited the joint staff of military operations in Ukraine earlier in the morning and interacted with force commanders led by Chief General Staff Gen Valery Gerasimov.



**RUSSIA TESTS BUREVESTNIK. WHAT IS IT?**

- Nuclear powered missile
- Missile flew for 14,000 km in 15 hours
- Putin says it can pierce any missile defences

Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed Russia successfully tested the ground-launched Burevestnik the cruise missile **PHOTO: X**

Gerasimov briefed Putin about the encirclement of more than 10,000 Ukrainian troops in two vital directions.

"A large group of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, comprising 31 battalions, has been blocked," Gerasimov said.

**THREE KILLED IN KYIV**

Russia targeted Ukraine's capital with drones, killing three people in their homes, local authorities said early on Sunday. At least 29 people were wounded, seven of them children, in what was the second consecutive nighttime attack on Kyiv to claim civilian lives.

Russian drones caused fires in two residential buildings in the capital's Desnianskyi district. Emergency crews evacuated civilians from a nine-storey building and a 16-storey building. *—PTI*

## Mamdani says aunt was afraid of wearing hijab post 9/11; Vance trolls

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

US Vice President JD Vance mocked New York City mayoral frontrunner Zohran Mamdani after the latter delivered an emotional speech recalling his Muslim aunt's fear of wearing a hijab in the aftermath of the 11 September attacks.

Speaking outside the Islamic Cultural Center of The Bronx, Mamdani said, "My aunt stopped riding the subway after 11 Sept because she didn't feel safe being seen in a headscarf (hijab)." He said his aunt's fear reflected the broader climate of Islamophobia that gripped the country after the attacks.

Vance later took to X to mock Mamdani, posting, "According to Zohran, the real victim of 9/11 was his auntie who got some (allegedly) bad looks," sharing a clip of Mamdani in tears.

US Vice President JD Vance Mocks and New York Mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani's **PHOTO: X**

- Mamdani said that his Muslim aunt stopped riding the subway after 9/11. Vance mocked him, saying "the real victim of 9/11 was his auntie"

Mamdani vowed to embrace his Muslim identity amid criticism from former governor Andrew Cuomo and Republican Curtis Sliwa, calling their remarks "racist and baseless." Expressing regret for earlier downplaying his faith, he said, "I will not change who I am or how I eat for the faith I'm proud to call my own. I will no longer look for myself in the shadows." *—Agencies*

## Belarus balloons disrupt Lithuanian flights twice

**VILNIUS, 26 OCT**

Flights at Lithuania's main airport were disrupted on two successive nights due to suspected balloon sightings from Belarus, reportedly used to smuggle cigarettes. On Saturday night, air traffic at Vilnius Airport was suspended from 9.35pm to 3.30am, causing four cancellations and seven diversions. A similar disruption on Friday affected Vilnius and Kaunas airports, leading to 10 cancellations and four diversions. Lithuania's border crossings with Belarus at Medininkai and Šalcininkai were temporarily closed. PM Inga Ruginiene warned of longer border closures and tougher penalties for smugglers. National Security Commission will meet Monday to consider measures. Authorities say such balloons have transported only illegal cigarettes to date. *—PTI*

## Kamala open to running for Prez again in 2028

**WASHINGTON, 26 OCT**

Kamala Harris isn't ruling out another run for the White House.

In an interview with the BBC posted Saturday, Harris said she expects a woman will be President in the coming years, and it could "possibly" be her.

"I am not done," she said.

The former vice president said she hasn't decided whether to mount a 2028 presidential campaign.

"I have lived my entire career a life of service and it's in my bones. And there are many ways to serve," she said. "I've never listened to polls."

She's recently given a series of interviews following the September release of her book, '107 Days.' It looks back on her experience replacing then-President Joe Biden as the 2024 Democratic presidential nominee after he dropped out of the race.

She ultimately lost to President Donald Trump.

Last week, Harris said she sees herself as a leader of the party, including in pushing back against Trump and preparing for the 2026 midterms.

Several potential candidates are already taking steps to get to know voters in key states, including California Gov. Gavin Newsom, term-limited Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear and California Rep. Ro Khanna. Upwards of 30 high-profile Democrats could ultimately enter the primary. *—PTI*

## Argentina's midterm elections test Prez's mandate

**BUENOS AIRES, 26 OCT**

Argentina's midterm elections on Sunday are set to gauge President Javier Milei's grip on power, as stark economic disparities cast a shadow over voter sentiment. While luxury car dealerships in affluent Puerto Madero celebrate surging sales post-Milei's removal of import restrictions, residents in the impoverished Isla Maciel struggle for basic sustenance. "Before, we could choose what to cook," lamented Veronica Leguizamon, a local mother relying on soup kitchens since subsidies were cut.

US President Donald Trump has added pressure by threatening to rescind a USD 20 billion aid package if Milei loses to a "socialist or communist," causing jitters in the market. With inflation still above 30 per cent and purchasing

Javier Milei **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

power plummeting, the Peronist opposition is gaining ground. "You can't live on 290,000 pesos a month," grumbled Epifanía Contreras, referencing her monthly pension.

As the elections approach, Milei seeks to secure enough seats to defend his austerity measures. Many Argentines remain sceptical, fearing a return to cyclical economic chaos. "Each new government promises change and ends up being the same or worse," said real estate broker Matías Paredes. *—PTI*

**WEEK AFTER ROBBERY**

## *Two Louvre jewel robbery suspects caught*

**PARIS, 26 OCT**

French authorities have arrested suspects linked to the 88 million euros crown jewel heist at the Louvre Museum, Paris, a week after the audacious theft stunned the world.

Paris Prosecutor Laure Beccuau confirmed the arrests on Saturday evening, noting that one suspect was detained while attempting to leave the country via Roissy Airport. She did not disclose the number of arrests or confirm whether any stolen jewels had been recovered.

The thieves took under eight minutes last Sunday to steal eight priceless artefacts, including a sapphire diadem, emerald necklace, and diamond brooches once owned by 19th-century French royalty. Officials said the robbers

A wedding couple hugs as visitors queue to enter the Louvre museum three days after historic jewels were stolen in Paris on 22 Oct **PHOTO: X**

scaled the museum's façade using a basket lift, broke a window, smashed display cases, and escaped swiftly. The museum's director called it a 'terrible failure.'

Investigators from a special police unit specialising in armed robberies and art thefts made the arrests. Beccuau criticised media leaks, warning they could hinder the ongoing investigation involving over 100 officers working to trace the jewels and all culprits.

- Investigators from a special police unit specialising in armed robberies and art thefts made the arrests.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez praised police efforts, saying they worked tirelessly, just as I asked them to.

The Louvre reopened earlier this week following what experts have called one of the most daring museum thefts of the century. One recovered artefact, Empress Eugénie's emerald-set crown with 1,300 diamonds, was found outside the museum, damaged but salvageable. *—PTI*

## SBI to hire 3,500 officers to drive business growth

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

The country's biggest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) will hire around 3,500 officers to bolster its operations and enhance service delivery nationwide. The bank has recruited 505 probationary officers (POs) in June, SBI Deputy Managing Director (HR) & Chief Development Officer (CDO) Kishore Kumar Poludasu said. 1,300 specialist officers have already been selected to look after the IT and cybersecurity space. The bank may also recruit 3,000 circle-based officers in the current financial year. SBI Chairman CS Setty announced that the bank's total recruitment across categories would be about 18,000. The bank also aims to increase its women workforce to 30 per cent within five years. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

## RBI reappoints CS Rajan as Kotak Bank's Chairman

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the reappointment of CS Rajan as part-time chairman of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited for another term beginning 1 January, 2026 until 21 October, 2027. Rajan has been serving in this capacity since 1January, 2024, following his appointment as an independent director on the Bank's Board. Rajan expressed gratitude for the continued trust placed in him. An IAS officer of the 1978 batch, Rajan retired as the chief secretary of the Rajasthan government in 2016. He served in leadership roles for 12 years in key infrastructure sectors. He also held key positions in the Board of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Limited. *—PTI*

## Passenger vehicle exports rise 18% in April-Sept

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Passenger vehicle exports from India rose by 18 per cent year-on-year in the April-September period with Maruti Suzuki leading the segment with shipment of over 2 lakh units, according to the SIAM data. Total passenger vehicle exports in the first half of the current fiscal year rose to 4,45,884 units as compared with 3,76,679 units in the year-ago period, an increase of 18.4 per cent. Passenger car shipments rose to 2,29,281 units in the period an increase of 12 per cent. Similarly, utility vehicle exports to overseas markets rose 26 per cent year on year to 2,11,373 units in the April-September period. Van shipments rose 36.5 per cent to 5,230 units. *—PTI*

## Unilever and L'Oréal report major growth

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Multinational consumer goods companies Unilever and L'Oréal are witnessing strong growth on e-commerce platforms in many markets, with India emerging as a standout performer. Unilever and L'Oréal, in their earnings calls for the September quarter, reported a doubling of their sales, helped by hyper-local delivery platforms. Unilever CEO Fernando Fernandez said digital commerce accounts for 17 per cent of the British consumer goods company's revenue. "We are growing Amazon at 15 per cent, Walmart.com at 25 per cent, Flipkart in India at 30 per cent and TikTok globally at 70 per cent," he said. Unilever's portfolio is growing following the research it has done through disposals of value brands and significant acquisitions. *—PTI*

# Biggest Adani investors are US insurers, not LIC: Data

### In June, Athene made ₹6,650 cr investment in Adani Airport

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

- LIC's investments in the Adani group were under the spotlight after The Washington Post reported that government officials influenced LIC's investment decisions amid global investor hesitation.

Gautam Adani **PHOTO: PTI**

Life Insurance Corporation of India's investment in Adani group companies may be under the spotlight, but recent data shows that some of the largest investments in entities controlled by billionaire Gautam Adani have come not from the state insurer but from major US and global insurers.

In June 2025, a month after USD 570 million (Rs 5,000 crore) investment by Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) in Adani Ports & SEZ, US-based Athene Insurance led a Rs 6,650 crore (USD 750 million) debt investment in Adani's Mumbai International Airport, joined by several leading international insurance firms.

Apollo Global Management -- Athene's parent company -- in a statement on June 23 stated that its managed funds, affiliates, and other long-term investors had completed a USD 750 million "investment grade rated financing" for Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MAIL).

This was Apollo's second large financing for MIAL, following its previous financing that provided operational flexibility to deleverage.

Other fund raises included Adani Green Energy Ltd raising around USD 250 million from a group of global lenders, including DBS Bank, DZ Bank, Rabobank, and Bank SinoPac Co Ltd.

LIC's investments in the Adani group were under the spotlight after The Washington Post reported that government officials influenced LIC's investment decisions amid global investor hesitation.

On Saturday, LIC called the report "false, baseless and far from the truth" and said its investments in Adani group companies were made independently and in accordance with its board-approved policies, following detailed due diligence.

LIC owns 4 per cent (worth Rs 60,000 crore) of Adani stocks versus 6.94 per cent (Rs 1.33 lakh crore) in Reliance, 15.86 per cent (Rs 82,800 crore) in ITC Ltd, 4.89 per cent (Rs 64,725 crore) in HDFC Bank, and 9.59 per cent (Rs 79,361 crore) in SBI. LIC holds 5.02 per cent of TCS worth Rs 5.7 lakh crore. *—PTI*

**TO FUND NEW STORES**

# Lenskart to launch Rs 2,150 cr IPO on 31 October

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Eyewear retailer Lens kart Solutions Ltd is set to open its initial public offering (IPO) on 31 October, aiming to raise 2,150 crore (around £210 million) through a fresh issue of shares, according to its Red Herring Prospectus (RHP). The issue will close on 4 November, with anchor investor bidding scheduled for 30 October.

In addition to the fresh issue, the IPO will feature an offer-for-sale (OFS) of more than 12.75 crore equity shares from promoters and existing investors. Promoters Peyush Bansal, Neha Bansal, Amit Chaudhary, and Sumeet Kapahi, along with investors including SoftBank's SVF II Lightbulb (Cayman) Ltd, Schroders Capital, PI Opportunities Fund II, Macritchie Investments, Kedaara Capital, and Alpha Wave Ventures, will divest part of their holdings.

Proceeds from the IPO will fund new company-operated stores in India, technology and cloud infrastructure, brand marketing, potential acquisitions, and general corporate purposes.

Last week, reports revealed that billionaire investor Radhakishan Damani, founder of Avenue Supermarts (DMart), invested around Rs 90 crore in Lenskart during a pre-IPO funding round.

Founded in 2008 and led by Chief Executive Peyush Bansal, Lenskart began as an online eyewear platform before expanding into physical retail in 2013. The company now operates across major Indian cities and has expanded internationally into Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Lenskart's shares are expected to list on Indian stock exchanges on 10 November. *—PTI*

# OVL seeks legal advice after US sanctions Russian oilfield

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) has requested legal advice following the United States' imposition of sanctions on a Russian oilfield in which a consortium of Indian companies holds a 49.9 per cent stake. US President Donald Trump announced the sanctions on 22 October, targeting major Russian oil firms Rosneft and Lukoil to pressure Moscow over its ongoing war in Ukraine.

The sanctions, enacted by the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), affect several subsidiaries of Rosneft and Lukoil, including CJSC Vankorneft, which is partly owned by OVL. OVL has a 26 per cent stake in Vankorneft, while Oil India Ltd (OIL), Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), and Bharat PetroResources Ltd collectively own 23.9 per cent, with Rosneft controlling the remaining 50.1 per cent.

According to sources, the current reading of the OFAC sanctions suggests they do not apply to Indian firms as none hold a majority stake in Vankorneft. OVL is proactively seeking legal opinions to avoid any potential violations.

"We want to be 100 per cent sure we are not violating any sanctions," noted a source.

The sanctions have complicated matters for Indian firms, which have been unable to repatriate accumulated dividends of around $1.4 billion from Vankorneft due to inability to process transactions amidst sanctions. Violations of these regulations could restrict Indian companies from accessing overseas funds and using US dollars for international transactions. *—PTI*

## India's forex reserves near record $702.28B

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

India's foreign exchange reserves rose by USD 4.5 billion to USD 702.28 billion in the week ending 17 October, driven mainly by a surge in gold holdings, according to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest Weekly Statistical Supplement. The country's forex reserves are now close to their all-time high of USD 704.89 billion, recorded in September 2024.

During the reported week, foreign currency assets (FCA) — the largest component of reserves — fell by USD 1.69 billion to USD 570.41 billion. In contrast, gold reserves jumped by USD 6.18 billion to USD 108.55 billion, reflecting the sharp rise in global gold prices amid heightened geopolitical uncertainty.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted that India's reserves are sufficient to cover more than 11 months of merchandise imports, underscoring the resilience of the external sector. The RBI continues to manage rupee volatility by strategically buying and selling US dollars.

India added about USD 58 billion to its reserves in 2023 after a USD 71 billion decline in 2022. *—ANI*

## Vedanta raises $500M via bonds for repayments

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Vedanta Resources Ltd (VRL), led by Anil Agarwal, has successfully raised $500 million through a bond issuance, aimed at repaying its near-term obligations. In a letter to bondholders, the company shared that the "average maturity of its debt portfolio is now over four years," and it has managed to reduce its weighted average interest cost to single digits, thus strengthening its capital structure.

The funds will be used to settle a $550 million Private Credit Facility (PCF) as part of its deleveraging strategy. This move ensures that the Group has no significant maturities until FY27, providing a balanced liability framework.

Vedanta maintains a robust liquidity position, bolstered by dividend inflows from its operating subsidiaries and healthy free cash generation. The company also secured a $500 million term loan facility with a consortium of banks and retains $682 million in undrawn long-term loans.

Operationally, Vedanta's primary sectors, including zinc, oil and gas, aluminium, and power, continue to deliver strong EBITDA and cash flows, with commodity prices remaining resilient despite global trade disruptions. The ongoing demerger of the firm into five independent entities aims to enhance value and transparency. *—PTI*

# 7 top firms' mcap jumps by Rs 1.55 lakh crore

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Seven of India's ten most valued companies together added Rs 1,55,710.74 crore in market capitalisation during the holiday-shortened week, led by strong gains in Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), amid firm domestic equity sentiment.

The BSE Sensex advanced 259.69 points, or 0.30 per cent, during the week, hitting a 52-week high of 85,290.06 on Thursday.

Reliance Industries' valuation jumped by Rs 46,687.03 crore to Rs 19,64,170.74 crore, while TCS gained Rs 36,126.6 crore to Rs 11,08,021.21 crore. Infosys rose by Rs 34,938.51 crore to Rs 6,33,712.38 crore, and the State Bank of India increased by Rs 13,892.07 crore to Rs 8,34,817.05 crore.

Bajaj Finance, Bharti Airtel and LIC also posted gains, adding Rs 11,947.17 crore, Rs 9,779.11 crore and Rs 2,340.25 crore respectively.

Meanwhile, ICICI Bank's valuation declined by Rs 43,744.59 crore, Hindustan Unilever fell Rs 20,523.68 crore, and HDFC Bank slipped Rs 11,983.68 crore.

Reliance Industries remained India's most valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, TCS, ICICI Bank, SBI, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and LIC. *—PTI*

# Reliance investments in AI infra may top $12-15 billion

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

- The first phase of the data centre is already in progress in Gujarat, with expectations for the initial 100MW capacity to address demand from enterprises.

Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd is poised to invest approximately USD 12-15 billion in artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure over several years, according to a report by Morgan Stanley.

This investment will include the development of a substantial 1GW data centre as part of Reliance's strategic shift towards AI. The new wholly-owned subsidiary, Reliance Intelligence, will lead initiatives focused on infrastructure, partnerships with global tech leaders, service development, and talent training to build India's AI workforce.

The first phase of the data centre is already in progress in Jamnagar, Gujarat, with expectations for the initial 100MW capacity to address demand from enterprises.

Additionally, Reliance is forming a joint venture with Meta's subsidiary to create enterprise AI services using open-source models. Morgan Stanley predicts a return on capital employed of around 11 per cent on Reliance's AI investments, with significant annual revenues anticipated from the new data centre services as Reliance positions itself at the forefront of AI development. *—PTI*

## India to host 4-day aviation safety summit

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

India will host the Asia Pacific Accident Investigation Group (APAC-AIG) meeting for the first time in New Delhi from 28 to 31 October, with around 90 aircraft accident investigators expected to attend.

The event is being organised by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on behalf of the Civil Aviation Ministry. Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu will inaugurate the meeting on 28 October.

Held annually under the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the meeting brings together representatives from Asia-Pacific member states to share expertise and strengthen cooperation in aircraft accident and incident investigations.

A two-day workshop on 28–29 October will cover investigation processes and reporting, involving AAIB, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) officials, and international participants.

Formal discussions among ICAO representatives and AAIB officials will take place on 30–31 October.

The AAIB, responsible for investigating aviation accidents and serious incidents in Indian airspace, is currently handling around 25 ongoing investigations, including the June 12 Air India crashes, which killed 260 people. *—PTI*

## No immediate impact from H1B visa fee hike: Tata CEO

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Tata Technologies Ltd's CEO and Managing Director, Warren Harris, has stated that the recent hike in the US H-1B visa fees, which is now set at USD 100,000, will not have any short-term impact on the company. However, it will influence future staffing strategies. Harris noted that Tata Technologies employs approximately 70 per cent of its workforce locally within their respective countries, which mitigates exposure to visa complications faced by many Indian competitors. "We are cognizant of the challenge," he remarked, while explaining that the company's operational structure alleviates some concerns. In the second quarter, the firm saw a profit after tax rise to Rs 165.5 crore. *—PTI*

**EQUAL HOURS, DIFFERENT PAY**

# *Wage gap persists between gig, permanent workers*

**MUMBAI, 26 OCT**

Even as festive hiring for the year surged, wage parity between gig and permanent employees remained unresolved, with 47 per cent of respondents believing there is a pay gap, a report has revealed.

When asked how the hourly pay of gig or freelance workers compares to that of permanent employees for the same role, 11 per cent respondents said earnings were up to 10 per cent less, 23 per cent said wages were 10-25 per cent lower and 13 per cent revealed the gap exceeds 25 per cent, according to the report by Genius HRTech (formerly Genius Consultants).

Collectively, the report found that nearly half of the workforce -- 47 per cent -- believe gig workers are paid less than their permanent counterparts, revealing a persistent disparity that continues to shadow India's festive hiring landscape.

The report by workforce staffing services and HR Solutions provider is based on a Digipoll survey among 1,550 professionals across industries during 1-30 September , 2025.

The report further revealed that 73 per cent of respondents believe that festive gig workers should receive the same hourly pay as permanent employees for identical work, underscoring a clear sentiment across the workforce in favour of pay parity.

From the employer's perspective, however, most justify gig-permanent pay gaps by citing flexibility.

Over 56 per cent of employers cited the absence of long-term benefits or obligations as the main reason, followed by 24 per cent who pointed to short-term employment duration and 10 per cent who attributed it to perceived lower skill or training levels. *—PTI*

# Bhullar registers first Top-10 of year in Manila

Indian golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar PHOTO: PTI

**MANILA, 26 OCT**

Indian golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar produced a steady three-under 69 on the final day to register a Top-10 finish at the USD 2 million International Series Philippines here on Sunday.

Bhullar (67-69-67-69), who stayed in the Top-10 this whole week, carded all four rounds under 70 for a total of 16-under. He finished Tied-seventh for his first Top-10 on the International Series in 2025. It was also his first top-10 outside India this year.

Among other Indians in fray, Karandeep Kochhar (72) at nine-under was T-36, Ajeetesh Sandhu (69) was eight-under for the week at T-40th.

SSP Chawrasia and Rayhan Thomas had missed the cut.

Miguel Tabuena, who was one of the three co-leaders after the third round, compiled a fine seven-under 65 to break out of the overnight lead group, which also had Sarit Suwannarut and Sampson Zheng.

Local hero Tabuena had an eagle and six birdies against one solitary bogey as he held off Japan's Kazuki Higa, who also had a 65, which included four closing birdies.

Tabuena won comfortably by three shots as he kept the momentum with four birdies on the back nine.

Higa was tied for second with fellow Japanese Yosuke Asaji at 67 at 21-under. Sarit (69) and Zheng (69) were tied for fourth at 20-under, while Marc Leishman (65) was sixth at 19-under.

Bhullar was tied for seventh with Caleb Surrat (67) at 16-under.

Bhullar picked up two birdies on the front nine at the third and the eighth hole and added a third on the tenth before dropping his first shot on the 11th. A late birdie on the 15th and three closing pars saw him finish a 69.

In six International Series starts this season, Bhullar cut all six events. *—PTI*

# Gukesh & Divya clinch double gold at ECC Cup

## Divya is the only woman competitor in the upcoming WC

**ST. LOUIS, 26 OCT**

Ahead of the upcoming Chess World Cup, Indian players had an impressive outing at the European Club Cup in Rhodes (Greece).

D Gukesh clinched gold on the top board, and his team SuperChess also emerged as champions. The performance will be a huge boost for Gukesh, as he has been in inconsistent form since becoming the World Champion.

In the women's section, Divya Deshmukh bagged gold on the second board, and her team, Cercle d'echecs de Monte Carl,o became champions. Divya is the only woman competitor in the upcoming World Cup, and her performance puts her in good shape ahead of the tournament in India. The Chess World Cup 2025 is scheduled to take place in Goa from 31 October to 27 November. The winner, runner-up, and third-place finisher will also get berths at the 2026 Candidates.

There are 24 players from India participating in the tournament. Gukesh is the top seed, and Arjun Erigaisi, R Praggnanandhaa are the second and third seeds.

Gukesh ended 2024 by becoming the new World Champion. But 2025 has been a tough year for him.

D Gukesh and Divya Deshmukh clinched gold PHOTO: PTI

In January, he lost to R. Praggnanandhaa in the tie-breaker round to decide the winner of the Tata Masters. Meanwhile, in the inaugural Freestyle Chess Grand Slam, he came eighth and then 11th in the Paris leg.

He was in action in the second leg of the Grand Chess Tour 2025 in Romania, and also came sixth.At Norway Chess, he came third with 14.5 points, including a win over **Magnus Carlsen**. He also beat Carlsen in the Rapid section of the SuperUnited Croatia 2025. Almost rushing to another continent from Europe after leading his team Super Chess to a fantastic win in the European Club Cup, Gukesh will face the top three-ranked players in the world over 18 games to be played under rapid chess format at the newly designed facility here at the St. Louis Chess Club.

World number one since 2011, Magnus Carlsen's break ends after becoming a proud father recently, and the world number one will yet again start as the favorite ahead of the American duo of **Hikaru Nakamura** and Fabiano Caruana. *—PTI*

**BADMINTON ASIA C'SHIPS**

The Indian contingent wrapped up the event with two gold, one silver, and two bronze medals PHOTO: PTI

# Shaina, Diksha win gold as India records best-ever show

**CHENGDU, 26 OCT**

India recorded its best-ever showing at the Badminton Asia U17 & U15 Championships as Shaina Manimuthu and Diksha Sudhakar clinched gold medals in their respective categories here on Sunday.

In the U15 girls' singles final, Shaina overcame Japan's Chiharu Tomita 21-14, 22-20, while Diksha outclassed compatriot Lakshya Rajesh 21-16, 21-9 to take the U17 girls' singles crown.

With Sunday's triumphs, the Indian contingent wrapped up the continental event with two gold, one silver, and two bronze medals, its best-ever haul at the championships

The last time India secured two gold medals was in 2013 when Siril Verma won the U15 boys' singles title and Chirag Shetty and MR Arjun claimed the U17 boys' doubles crown.

On Sunday, Shaina became the fourth Indian girls' singles player to clinch the U15 crown as she dominated Tomita in the opening game and then staved off a late challenge in the second game to close out the match in 44 minutes.

Later, Diksha became the first Indian girls' singles player to win the U17 title, dominating the 27-minute all-Indian final. Jagsher Singh Khanggura and the mixed doubles combination of Jangjeet Singh Kajla and Jananika Ramesh had bagged bronze on Saturday. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## Brook's ton in vain as NZ beat England by 4 wickets

**WELLINGTON, 26 OCT**

Batting first, England suffered a horrid top-order batting collapse as they were reeling 5 for 3, which soon became 10 for 4 and 56 for 6, but Brook's outrageous knock of 135 off 101 lifted the visitors to a respectable total of 223-10 in 35.2 overs. Earlier, England were bowled out for 223 in the first ODI. The first hour belonged to the Kiwis, who left England reeling at 56-6, with Zakary Foulkes taking four wickets. Engkand fought back with a partnership of 87 between Harry Brook and Jamie Overton before the latter was out for 46. Brook was in sublime form and decimated every query New Zealand threw at him. New Zealand 224 for 6 (Mitchell 78*, Bracewell 51, Carse 3-45) beat England 223 (Brook 135, Overton 46, Foulkes 4-41, Duffy 3-66) by four wickets. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## India beat Argentina at Int'l Polo Cup

**NEW DELHI, 26 OCT**

Hosts India edged past Argentina 10-9 in the KogniVera International Polo Cup at the iconic Jaipur Polo Ground here on Sunday. India was led by Sawai Padmanabh Singh of Jaipur. From precision strikes to strategic plays, the match embodied the very essence of international polo with passion, power, and partnership. "Winning against Argentina is an incredible moment for all of us. Every player gave their best, and the energy from the stands pushed us even further. It's a proud day for Indian polo," India captain Simran Singh Shergill said. *—PTI*

## India in SFsof Asia Rugby Emirates Sevens Trophy

**MUSCAT, 26 OCT**

The Indian men's rugby team has made it to the semifinals of the Asia Rugby Emirates Sevens Trophy following an impressive opening day of the tournament. After a fighting 14-10 win over Lebanon in the opener, India maintained momentum with a 26-5 victory against Afghanistan, and went on to secure a commanding 21-7 win over Iran in the quarter-final. With three wins from three matches, India face Saudi Arabia in the semifinal on Monday. A win will not only send the team into the final but also seal a historic promotion to Division 1 - the Asia Rugby Sevens Series - for the first time. *—PTI*

## Sihag finishes runner-up at Indonesia Masters

**JAKARTA, 26 OCT**

Indian shuttler Devika Sihag's fine run came to an end at the Indonesia Masters after losing the women's singles final to former world champion Nozomi Okuhara of Japan here Sunday. The 20-year-old from Haryana, who had captured the Malaysia International Challenge title in August, went down 11-21, 9-21 to the top-seeded Okuhara in a one-sided summit clash of the Super 100 tournament. Eighth seed Sihag had earlier defeated Macau's Pui Chi Wa in the opening round, before notching up wins over Lee So Yui of Chinese Taipei, Ishika Jaiswal of the USA, and local hope Mutiara Ayu Puspitasari en route to the final. *—PTI*

# Cash goal gives Villa surprise victory

**LONDON, 26 OCT**

Matty Cash fired Aston Villa to a 1-0 win over Manchester City to leave Pep Guardiola's side six points off Premier League leaders Arsenal.

Cash, who played a brilliant pass in the build-up to Villa's winner at Tottenham last weekend, showed his fine technique again at Villa Park, arrowing an effort with his weaker left foot into the bottom corner 19 minutes into the first half.

Erling Haaland wasted a one-on-one chance just moments later, and from then on, Villa largely limited their visitors, with City managing just two shots in total in the first half before Savinho saw a shot after the break deflected over the bar by Pau Torres.

Haaland - who had scored in his previous 12 games for club and country - thought he'd salvaged a point for his side in the 90th minute when he painfully slid into a post as he diverted the ball into the net, but an offside flag had rightly gone up against Omar Marmoush.

It was a fine tactical game plan from Villa boss Unai Emery, whose side retained a threat on the break throughout the contest and could have doubled their advantage had Ruben Dias not made blocks to deny Ollie Watkins and John McGinn.

MATTY CASH PHOTO: X/@ASTONVILLAFC

Villa have now won four in a row in the Premier League and, after their slow start to the season, are up to seventh, a point behind fourth-placed Manchester City. But Guardiola's men will be wary of the gap that has opened up between them and title rivals Arsenal. *—PTI*

## Malaysian MotoGP 2025: Alex wins in dominant style

**DUBAI, 26 OCT**

Alex Marquez dominated the Malaysian MotoGP on Sunday to clinch his third victory of the season, romping home more than two seconds ahead of fellow Spaniard Pedro Acosta. Marquez, who confirmed his runner-up spot in the world championship standings this weekend behind brother Marc, won for the first time this year outside Spain following success at the Spanish and Catalan Grand Prix races.

Honda's Joan Mir was third to make it an all-Spanish podium, with Franco Morbidelli and Fabio Quartararo completing the top five. *—PTI*

**WOMEN'S WORLD CUP**

# England beat NZ by 8 wickets

**VISAKHAPATNAM, 26 OCT**

England opener Amy Jones struck an unbeaten half-century, while Tammy Beaumont and batting stalwart Heather Knight also made useful contributions as four-time champions defeated New Zealand by eight wickets in a Women's World Cup match here on Sunday.

Jones (86 not out off 92 balls, 4x11, 6x1) and Beaumont (40 runs off 38 balls, 4x7) shared a 75-run opening-wicket stand in the dead rubber as England chased down the paltry 169-run target in 29.2 overs. Knight contributed 33.

Electing to bat, New Zealand were dismissed for 168 in 38.2 overs. Following the emphatic win in their last league encounter, England, who are already in the semifinals, jumped to second spot on the table with 11 points, pushing South Africa (10 points) to third place. Australia is leading the charts with 13 points.

From being a medium-pacer batting at No. 11 on her ODI debut against Australia in 2006, Sophie Devine bids farewell to ODIs PHOTO: PTI

New Zealand 168 all out in 38.2 overs (Georgia Plimmer 43, Amelia Kerr 35; Linsey Smith 3/30).

England 172 for 2 in 29.2 overs (Amy Jones 86 not out, Tammy Beaumont 40, Heather Knight 33). *—PTI*

# Sujeet makes U23 Worlds semis

**NOVI SAD, 26 OCT**

Sujeet Kalkal, who has established himself as India's top men's 65kg wrestler, stormed into the semifinals of the U23 World Championships, but three of his compatriots lost in the early stages of their respective categories here on Sunday.

Sujeet, who won a bronze in the same championships last year and claimed the title in the U23 Asian Championship this year, won his first two bouts by technical superiority against Moldova's Fiodor Ceavdari (12-2) and Poland's Dominik Jakub (11-0).

He was trailing against Bashir Magomedov in the quarterfinal but eventually won 4-2 to make the semis, where he will meet Japan's Yuto Nishiuchi. Shubham (61kg) lost his 1/8th round by technical superiority to Azerbaijan's Jeyhun Allahverdiyev after winning his first bout due to injury to his rival.

Ashish (86kg) provided some resistance to his Iranian rival Abolfazl Yaser Rahmani before losing the Qualification round 4-6.

SUJEET KALKAL PHOTO: PTI

In 97kg, Vicky put up a good show, winning by technical superiority against Uzbekistan's Otabek Nazirboev (10-0).

He then produced a great fight against Georgia's Merab but lost the high-scoring 1/8 round 13-15. *—PTI*

**RANJI TROPHY ELITE GROUP B MATCH**

# *Nair's hundred carries K'taka to a strong position*

**SHIVAMOGGA, 26 OCT**

Karun Nair made his 25th first-class hundred to take Karnataka to a strong position against Goa on the rain-hit second day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group B match here on Sunday.

Karun, who was omitted from the India Test squad after a middling series in England recently, made an unbeaten 174 off 267 balls to announce his return to the run-making ways.

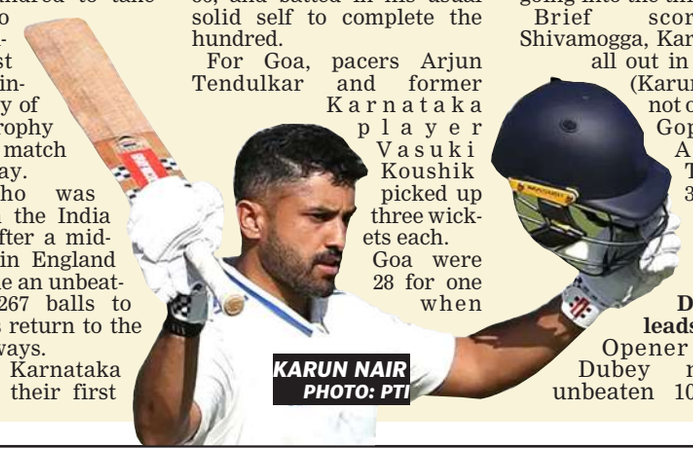
It helped Karnataka make 371 in their first innings after resuming from overnight 222 for five.

Karun started the day from 86, and batted in his usual solid self to complete the hundred.

For Goa, pacers Arjun Tendulkar and former Karnataka player Vasuki Koushik picked up three wickets each.

Goa were 28 for one when the rain poured down to end the day's proceedings, and now they trail by 343 runs going into the third day.

Brief scores: At Shivamogga, Karnataka: 371 all out in 110.1 overs (Karun Nair 174 not out, Shreyas Gopal 57; Arjun Tendulkar 3/100, Vasuki Koushik 3/35).



KARUN NAIR PHOTO: PTI

**Dubey leads MP fight**

Opener Yash Dubey made an unbeaten 109 off 236 balls as Madhya Pradesh survived two late blows to reach 195 for four against Saurashtra at Rajkot.

The home side, starting from 258 for eight, were bowled out quite early in the first session for 260.

Aryan Pandey and Kumar Kartikeya shared eight wickets equally.

Dubey and opener Harsh Gawli added 87 runs for the opening wicket before the latter fell to seasoned pacer Jaidev Unadkat. *—PTI*

# PCB set to sack Wasim as women's team head coach

**KARACHI, 26 OCT**

Pakistan Cricket Board on Sunday has decided against renewing the contract of women's national team head coach Muhammad Wasim after a disappointing show in the ongoing Women's ODI World Cup in India.

Pakistan ended up at seventh position in the eight-team competition table, but could slip to last position if Bangladesh does well in their last game. They lost four out of their seven games, while the remaining three were washed out. A reliable source in the PCB said that the PCB Chairman, Mohsin Naqvi, was disappointed that Wasim didn't deliver as promised.

The PCB appointed Wasim last year, and in his tenure, Pakistan lost in the Asia Cup semi-final to Sri Lanka and then managed just one win in four matches of the Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa.

The biggest complaint against Wasim is that, despite being a batter, there was no significant improvement seen in the national team's batting prowess, which remains its weakest link in international events. *—PTI*